# SAVING PRIVATE RYAN

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*You don't live in a world all alone.*
*Your brothers are here too.*

-- Albert Schweitzer

IN BLACKNESS, FADE UP THE BASSO ROAR of twin Pratt & Whitney engines hammering out 1,200 horses each -- a subcutaneous thrum so pervasive it gets our teeth vibrating...

SUPER TITLE:

D-DAY 0130 HOURS

INT - DOUGLAS C-47 "DAKOTA" - NIGHT

...and a name appears, filling the screen, the image vibrating and shaking:

**RYAN**

The name is military-stenciled on an EQUIPMENT BAG between a paratrooper's jump-booted feet (the bag is tethered to him for a jump). Hold for a beat...

...and a FIST-SIZED HOLE blows up through the floor, winging shrapnel at the ceiling. It clatter-bounces like hail hitting a tin shed and drops smoking fragments everywhere. Somewhere down the row, somebody cries out:

VOICE (O.S.)
SON OF A BITCH!

RYAN'S HANDS reach down and dig through the equipment bag, frantically searching for something. We notice the bag is mostly filled with TNT...

...which could be bad news, considering that WHITE-HOT TRACER ROUNDS are now RIPPING up through the floor boards, spewing long trails of phosphorous. The plane SHAKES AND YAWS violently as voices holler all around us:

VOICES (O.S.)
(various, ad-lib)
WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?...LET'S GO, LET'S GO!...GODDAMN IT!

RYAN'S HANDS find what they're looking for, pull it from the bag. A rosary. His fingers work the beads, knuckles white.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Catholic or not, all the men of this "stick" are holding on for dear life, figuratively and literally. Many are praying. Some are crying. One guy, incongruously, is getting pissed trying to light his cigarette.

WHAM! An 88mm shell SLAMS up through the floor and EXPLODES as it exits the ceiling. Instant wind tunnel. The men are bounced off their seats by the concussion, landing in a wild tangle.

(CONTINUED)

There's now a two-foot diameter hole in the floor and a four-foot hole in the ceiling. The plane was damn near shot in half, but the son of a bitch is still holding together. Three paratroopers lie dead...

...and the scene is suddenly bathed in red as the JUMP LIGHTS activate. The JUMPMASTER screams at the top of his lungs, barely audible in the din:

JUMPMASTER
HOOK UP! HOOK UP!

They scramble desperately to gain their footing as the plane lurches and bucks. Each man is weighed down by over a hundred pounds of gear including parachute.

A TERRIFIED 17 YEAR-OLD PRIVATE

named STANZ is struggling to rise. RYAN'S HAND thrusts into frame (fingers tangled in the rosary), grabs his arm, helps him up. Off Stanz' grateful look, we FOLLOW RYAN'S HAND as he grabs Stanz' parachute line, thrusts it up, and HOOKS HIM ON TO THE STATIC LINE running the length of the plane...

...and we leave them behind, CAMERA TRAVELING FAST down the length of the static line as MORE HOOKS SLAP ON, one after another, hands lunging up into frame...

...and WE PAUSE BREATHLESSLY AT THE RED LIGHT above the door as THE JUMPMASTER'S FACE thrusts into frame:

JUMPMASTER
EQUIPMENT CHECK!

THE MEN
(fast-fast-overlapping)
SIXTEEN OKAY!--FIFTEEN OKAY!--
FOURTEEN OKAY!--TWELVE OKAY!--
ELEVEN OKAY!--NINE OKAY!--

And so on down the line, their voices all but lost in the merciless wind, skipping the numbers of their three dead comrades lying at their feet...

...and then a hush seems to fall, all sound taking on an unnatural clarity as they endure those final few moments of waiting. MACHINE GUN ROUNDS rattle the fuselage like rocks in a tin can. FLAK BURSTS blaze through the doors and shake the plane to its very frame. SHRAPNEL perforates the walls.

Several men are wounded as we watch, but they stay on their feet, grimly determined, waiting for:

The green light.

(CONTINUED)

JUMPMASTER
GO! GO! GO! GO! GO!

Men start hurling themselves past us as CAMERA PULLS BACK...

EXT - DOUGLAS C-47 "DAKOTA" - NIGHT

...and we smoothly leave the plane in the same shot, still widening. The men plummet away, one after another...

...and still we KEEP WIDENING to reveal the entire Dakota in flight...

...and suddenly more STREAMS OF MEN are falling from the sky right in front of camera...and still we keep widening...

...to reveal a spectacular, mind-boggling vista of airplanes thundering across the night sky:

COUNTLESS LONG ARCS OF TRACER FIRE are sweeping upward in every color of the rainbow, raking the sky for miles, hammering C-47s as far as the eye can see. FLAK IS BURSTING like popcorn. SEARCHLIGHTS are stabbing the clouds...

SEVERAL PLANES go down. One heels over almost gracefully, trailing fire. Another vanishes in a cataclysmic FIREBALL. A third loses a wing and corkscrews wildly from view...

HUNDREDS OF MEN are falling from the sky. Chutes are blossoming everywhere we look, white flowers in the dark, drifting into hell toward an unknown fate...

One of them was named Ryan, and we never did see his face...

FADE TO BLACK

IN BLACKNESS, FADE UP THE SOUND OF MASSIVE NAVAL BOMBARDMENT.

SUPER TITLE:

OMAHA BEACH 0615 HOURS

COUNTLESS NAVAL GUNS

are pounding out a ceaseless, bone-jarring, unprecedented volley of THUNDER AND FLAME. We're talking 5, 10, 12, 14, 15, and 16-inchers. The power is astonishing. It roars through the body, blows back the hair, rattles the ears...

EXT - NORMANDY COASTLINE - DAWN

...and hammers the coast with a merciless and unending BARRAGE OF EXPLOSIONS. The beaches are thick with smoke and flames.

(CONTINUED)

THE ALLIED ARMADA

is nothing less than stunning in scope, consisting of some five thousand ships and boats -- battleships, cruisers, mine sweepers, destroyers, troop carriers, you name it...most of which seem to be FIRING. And caught somewhere between ships and land (the proverbial rock and hard place) are:

THE HIGGINS BOATS

200 of them head for shore in the first wave -- unglamorous, utilitarian, flat-bottom landing craft. Each holds a platoon of 30 men (or 12 plus a jeep). Sweeping into frame f.g. is:

MILLER'S BOAT

The SOLDIERS aboard are mostly 18 to 20 year-olds. Scared to death. Trying to block out the fury around them. Seasick as hell, but with nothing left to throw up. They've been tossed around out here for hours.

Behind them, the BATTLESHIP TEXAS IS FIRING her 14-inch guns at the beach on a virtual horizontal. SHELLS SCREAM MASSIVELY overhead, the vacuum effect damn near lifting the Higgins boats right out of the water. Suddenly:

A NEARBY HIGGINS hits a mine and erupts skyward on an EXPLOSION of fuel, fire, wood, and bodies. A FLAMING JEEP cartwheels into the water.

Seawater rains down on Miller's boat, along with bits of mangled wreckage. Most horrible of all, a GI HELMET with a hole blown through it lands at the feet of PVT. DELANCEY. He recoils, kicking it away, screaming:

DELANCEY
JESUS CHRIST!

He starts weeping, coming apart at the seams. The others stare ahead, trying not to let his panic infect them as:

DELANCEY
They can't send us into this! What are they, nuts?

A FIGURE pushes through the men. Delancey is spun around, finds himself facing CAPTAIN JOHN MILLER -- in his 30's, the oldest man on the boat by far. He grabs Delancey by the jaw, turns his face toward the beach.

MILLER
See that? That's what's known as a shitstorm. By the time the Navy's done, there's not gonna be a German left.

(CONTINUED)

REIBEN, a kid from New York toting a B.A.R., speaks up:

REIBEN
I hope somebody mentioned that to the Germans.

MILLER
(shoots him a look)
The biggest problem we're gonna have getting up that beach is looking like a bunch of tourists. Embarrass the folks back home.

DELANCEY
(dubious, hopeful)
You think?

MILLER
I got Eisenhower's personal guarantee.

Crap or not, it has the desired effect. Delancey's over his panic attack. Miller lets go of his jaw, pats his cheek, and heads up toward --

THE BOW

-- where he stares ahead at the beach. We see it in his eyes, and in the sudden tremor that runs through his hand: he's as terrified as anybody. He clenches his fist, trying to force the trembling to stop. SERGEANT MICHAEL HORVATH (SARGE) appears at his side, tactful enough not to notice.

SARGE
Eisenhower, huh?

At that moment, THE NAVAL BARRAGE LIFTS. An UNCANNY SILENCE descends as the big guns readjust to fire inland. Everybody gazes up, knowing this is it, waiting for the final cue. LIEUTENANT BRIGGS cups his mouth and hollers out to sea:

BRIGGS
Go LCTs! Light 'em up!

There are 14 LCTs (among the 911 in the invasion fleet) positioned 3,500 meters offshore. They all fire their rocket batteries at once. The ships actually seem to explode, listing sharply from the recoil. It's a stunning sight, thousands of rockets WHOOSHING upward with a sound like a hurricane.

In less than a minute, 14,000 rockets pass over the Higgins boats and impact on the beach. It seems impossible that anything could live through it.

(CONTINUED)

THE FIRST WAVE OF HIGGINS BOATS

heave through the swells, nearing shore. The beach ahead is eerily silent, shrouded with smoke.

Maybe the Germans <u>are</u> beaten. Some GIs are even clambering up on the engine room deckings to check out the view.

Closer. Getting closer...

ANGLE ON BEACH

...and finally touching France. The ramps start dropping...

...<u>and that's when the real shitstorm hits.</u> The German forces have actually taken very few losses, and they OPEN FIRE with everything they've got:

GERMAN ARTILLERY blazes from the Tobruks and fortifications on the bluffs and ravines above (supported by an elaborate trench system that also remains virtually untouched)...

ADDITIONAL ARTILLERY EMPLACEMENTS down on the beach pound the arriving GIs from both ends with hellish flanking fire...

HUNDREDS OF MACHINE GUNS pour thousands of rounds into the killing zone from every nook and cranny, every crag and foxhole, every bunker and pillbox, every topographical fold and irregularity...in short, from <u>countless</u> concealed positions dotting the ridges and cliffs...

Bottom line is, there isn't a single foot of Omaha beach that isn't pre-sighted for crossing, plunging, or grazing fire from every manner of weapon. The result is murderous and stunning:

THE AMERICANS

are getting shot to pieces in a hell of screaming confusion. There is no mythical charge up the beach -- instead, there is carnage and destruction that takes the breath away. Few men even make it out of the surf -- they stumble, tumble, become floating corpses. Those that <u>do</u> make it to the sand are dying by the dozens in a cross-fire hail of bullets and artillery.

MILLER'S BOAT

is heading straight into this hell. TRACERS rip the haze. EXPLOSIONS pound the surf, throwing columns of water toward the sky. Higgins boats BLOW APART right and left.

THE COXSWAIN

is a scared, 18 year-old Navy kid. He throttles back, cutting speed. Miller hollers from the bow:

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

COXSWAIN
THIS IS AS FAR AS I GO!

Miller races toward the stern, pushing through his men:

MILLER
Take us in, goddamn it!

COXSWAIN
I can't even see the marker flags!
You get out right here!

Miller reaches the coxswain, lunges up into his face:

MILLER
You're not gonna drown my men, you
son of a bitch--

COXSWAIN
--screw you, I said I ain't gettin'
no closer--

Miller stuns everybody by pulling his .45 automatic from his holster, jacking a round into the chamber, and putting the gun to the coxswain's head.

MILLER
You take us in or I will.

The coxswain gapes. Miller's finger is tight on the trigger. He's serious. The kid throttles forward, heading in.

ANOTHER HIGGINS BOAT

running alongside theirs is suddenly STRAFED. Machine gun bullets CHEW down the row of screaming GIs and hit an even more unfortunate mark: the guy with the flamethrower. Bullets rupture the five gallon tank on his back and -- WHUMP! -- a BURST OF FLAMING GASOLINE engulfs the boat. A FEW BURNING MEN hurl themselves into the water, but most never even make it over the gunwale. It's a horrible way for 30 men to die...

MILLER'S BOAT

...a fact not lost on Miller's platoon. They pass the burning wreckage, sickened and aghast...

...and their boat runs aground on a sandbar. The coxswain jams it in reverse, then forward, trying desperately to pull off.

COXSWAIN
We're on a sandbar!

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
Get us closer!

COXSWAIN
I'm trying!

The coxswain is suddenly hit by machine gun bullets, slapped out of frame in an explosive red haze. Miller is left wearing a fine spray of blood like warpaint, stunned. He turns to his men. There's nothing left to do but:

MILLER
Drop that ramp! Let's go, let's go!

A WAR CRY rises from the throats of the men. They're amped-up, scared, bloodthirsty, pissed-off, excited -- an intense swirl of emotions verging on insanity. And in the back of every mind is a desperate little voice saying: it can't happen to me, I'm gonna be just fine, I won't even get a scratch...

The ramp comes down.

It's a slaughter:

The men in front are thrown back into the arms of their comrades. Triangulated .30 caliber MACHINE GUN FIRE rains into the boat like God's wrath itself, chewing screaming GIs to pieces, throwing men about like dolls, kicking up a red mist in a heaving tangle of arms and legs.

In less than twenty seconds, some two-thirds of the men lie dead or dying. Ten or so survivors make it over the corpses of their comrades to the ramp and throw themselves into the water. Bringing up the rear is:

MILLER
GO! GO!

Miller grabs a screaming Pvt. Delancey by the backpack and pulls him to his feet from a tangle of bodies, inadvertently saving his life by inches: bullets CHEW the spot where Delancey was. Miller propels him to the ramp, throws him over the edge, jumps in after him --

UNDERWATER

-- and sinks like a rock into a watery nightmare world. The sights and sounds are positively surreal: drowned soldiers are sinking all around us in the murk, some still thrashing weakly as their lungs give out. All manner of equipment and gear is tumbling down as far as the eye can see -- rifles, helmets, etc. Higgins boats churn overhead, engines THRUMMING eerily. EXPLODING SHELLS concuss the water and batter the senses. Most ominous of all, the surface itself is roiling as if hammered by rain -- machine gun bullets drumming the water.

On a final bizarre note, countless dead fish are floating up toward the surface, victims of the shelling.

Miller sees Delancey thrashing around, trying to undo the straps of his heavy pack. Miller's in the same desperate trouble -- his damn pack is dragging him down.

Miller pulls his knife, slashes his own straps, dumps his pack. He grabs Delancey, who's panicking, losing all his air. Miller manages to cut him loose, dragging him up toward --

THE SURFACE

-- where the NOISE OF BATTLE COMES CRASHING BACK and both men whoop in great lungfuls of air. There's chaos all around them: men thrashing, oil burning on the water, bullets ripping the waves. Miller inflates Delancey's vest, then his own. Delancey's clinging to him, gasping --

DELANCEY
--cap'n--jesus--thanks--

-- and a stream of bullets slam into his back. He arches in Miller's grasp, dead instantly, and rolls over in the water with a slack look of surprise.

Miller desperately tries to keep his head above water. He starts struggling/paddling toward shore, pushing Delancey's body ahead of him as a buoyant shield. Machine gun bullets rip into the corpse from time to time, jerking it violently in his grasp. Miller looks like a man who's wondering if this wouldn't be a good time to go insane.

He looks around, realizing he's not the only one. There are scores of men out here from any number of boats doing the same thing: working their way grimly toward shore, some using corpses for cover...past tangled and burning wreckage...past wave-tossed bodies...past hundreds of dead fish...

UNDERWATER

...and finally getting their feet under them. Dozens of legs come struggling through the surf toward us. CAMERA LIFTS OUT OF THE WATER, bringing them up onto --

THE BEACH

-- where some get mown down, but others stagger/crawl/dive for cover behind wreckage, bodies, beach obstacles...

Miller throws himself behind a "Belgian gate" -- a beach obstacle made of steel crossmembers welded in an X-shape. He presses against it for dear life as MACHINE GUN BULLETS hammer the metal, throwing massive sparks. Suddenly:

(CONTINUED)

WHAM! AN ARTILLERY SHELL EXPLODES right behind him, knocking him flat with a hammerblow of concussion and debris.

Abrupt silence. We suddenly can't hear a thing. All sounds of battle are gone, sucked away in a vacuum as:

MILLER

rises slowly, deeply disoriented and bleeding from a dozen shrapnel cuts, holding the Belgian gate for support. His gaze is blank as a blown fuse, with a look that says: I'm done. No more captain, no more army, no more nothing. Just let me crawl into my basket and stay there.

He looks up. Hundreds of bodies litter the beach before him. Countless wounded are moaning, thrashing, calling for help (though we can't hear them). The sand is a carpet of discarded weapons and equipment. A SHERMAN TANK burns furiously, muzzle cocked mutely, greasy black smoke roiling toward the sky.

Miller suddenly realizes there's a PRIVATE staring at him from a beach obstacle a few yards away. The kid looks like he's waiting for a reply. So do the THREE PRIVATES sharing his cover. SOUND STARTS RETURNING, faint but growing louder as:

MILLER
Huh? You say something?

PRIVATE #1
Yeah! Are you an officer?

Miller shakes his head, trying to get his hearing back, trying to clear the cobwebs:

MILLER
WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

PRIVATE
(top of his lungs)
I SAID, ARE YOU A GODDAMN OFFICER?

Miller has to think about it a moment, finally nods:

MILLER
Yeah!

Beat. The privates trade glances.

PRIVATE #2
Well? What the hell do we do now, sir?

Miller sees there are others out here like him -- hanging on by their fingertips, looking more like shipwreck victims than soldiers, but alive. SOUND RETURNS COMPLETELY as we hear:

(CONTINUED)

SARGE (O.S.)
Captain! Captain!

Miller turns, sees Horvath under cover a distance away. He's been shouting all this time, trying to get his attention:

SARGE
I'd say that shingle's the prettiest spot on this beach!

Miller turns to look. About 200 meters up the beach near the base of the German cliffs is the "shingle" -- a low seawall of rocks and sand topped with barbed wire. "Pretty" it's not, but it's cover. Hundreds of GIs are already up there in ragged groups -- digging foxholes, keeping low, tending wounded.

Miller banishes the last of his mental fog, painfully dredges up the will to keep going, turns and hollers at the private:

MILLER
You heard the sergeant! Get your ass up to that seawall before the Germans shoot it off!
(shouting)
THAT GOES FOR EVERYBODY! GET TO THE SHINGLE! MOVE!

A Sherman tank crashes out of the waves behind him, FIRING as it hits the beach. Miller breaks from cover --

STEADICAM WITH MILLER

-- and DOZENS OF MEN seem to emerge from nowhere, following his lead. This becomes the most grueling and courageous effort we've ever seen: they're crossing No-Man's-Land in the face of withering enemy fire just like their fathers did a war ago...

...using shell craters as foxholes...scrambling on hands and knees...leap-frogging positions...using knocked-out tanks for cover...doing some serious broken-field running...grabbing up discarded weapons or helping a wounded friend as they go...

Many are brutally cut down -- but more men swell the ranks along the way, popping out of shell holes or rising from amongst the dead, joining the exodus to the seawall.

MILLER'S POV (STEADICAM)

races past a burning half-track, traversing open ground toward the shingle...and stops, finding Lieutenant Briggs wounded on the sand, arm flailing, calling to him for help:

BRIGGS
...help me...Captain...help me...

(CONTINUED)

MILLER

races to the wounded man's side, grabs him by his pack harness, starts to drag him -- and a stream of bullets rips across Briggs, tearing him right out of Miller's grasp.

Miller scrambles as bullets stitch the sand. Sarge catches up, slams into him/grabs his collar/propels him along, both men hobbling that last dozen yards to --

THE SHINGLE

-- where they hurl themselves exhausted to the ground. Many soldiers making it off the beach are likewise tossing themselves to safety up and down the seawall --

-- but "safety" is a relative term. The Germans are raining MACHINE GUN AND MORTAR FIRE all along this position. The noise and chaos are incredible. Casualties are mounting.

Miller sees a lot of faces staring at him. Stripped of gear, huddling under scant cover, many wounded, they look exactly like what they are -- a bunch of scared kids.

MILLER
Who's in command here?

SOLDIER #1
You!

That's what Miller was afraid of. He looks to Sarge:

MILLER
You recognize where we are?

SARGE
About a mile from where we're supposed to be?

SOLDIER #2
Join the club! Nobody's where we're supposed to be!

Miller looks around, seeing a ragged mix of regiments and companies. He spots a RADIOMAN in the chaos, his back to us, yelling into a field phone. Miller scrambles to him, grabs his shoulder, pulls his face into view --

MILLER
WHERE'S OUR GODDAMN AIR SUPPORT?
TELL 'EM WE GOT NO AIR SUPPORT!

-- the radioman turns away, relaying the message. Miller grabs his shoulder again, brings his face around a second time --

MILLER
AND TELL 'EM OUR TANK SUPPORT'S STALLED! THEY'RE NOWHERE NEAR THE DRAWS!

-- the radioman turns away, hollering into the phone. Miller grabs him yet a third time --

MILLER
AND TELL 'EM--

-- and pulls him around to find half his face suddenly gone. The man pitches lifelessly to the sand. Miller grabs the radio, but it's bullet-riddled. He belly-crawls back to Sarge. Plunging suddenly into frame as bullets rip the seawall is:

REIBEN
I want a word with Eisenhower!

MILLER
Reiben!

REIBEN
Still kicking, sir! Don't ask me how!

SARGE
You seen anybody else?

REIBEN
Jackson, but that's it!

He points back the way he came. JACKSON is at the seawall.

SARGE
(top of his lungs)
2ND BATTALION, EASY COMPANY!

MELLISH, sharing cover with CAPARZO, hollers over:

MELLISH
Here, sir! Mellish and Caparzo!

CAPARZO
We got DeForest back there with Wade! D's hurt pretty bad, Wade says he ain't gonna make it!

MILLER'S POV

We glimpse WADE, the company medic, through a chaos of smoke and scrambling men. He's kneeling on the sand over a dying soldier, desperately trying to save the man. It's obviously a losing battle -- the chest wound is bad, and Wade is bloody up to his elbows. (Wade's older than most, mid-to-late 20's. We'll come to know him as steady and soft-spoken.)

RESUME MILLER AND SARGE

SARGE
(tries again)
2ND BATTALION, EASY COMPANY!

No further response. Miller looks dazed, like he's been slugged in the gut:

MILLER
That's it? That's all that's left?

SARGE
We got scattered pretty bad, sir.
There's bound to be more of us.

MILLER
Not enough. Not enough.

Sarge sees it and so do we: guilt and despair are about two heartbeats away from crushing Miller completely...

...but the moment passes as incoming mortar rounds pound the line. A DOZEN MEN are killed, bodies thrown lifelessly onto the sand. Somebody starts screaming for a corpsman (medic). A CORPORAL belly-crawls to Miller, frantic:

CORPORAL
We're getting pasted here, sir!
What are your orders?

Miller hesitates. Like it or not, these men are looking to him for answers. He looks around, his assessment bleak:

MILLER
We can't retreat, and we sure as
hell can't stay here! That means we
advance!

SOLDIER #3
You're out of your ever-loving
mind, sir! All due respect!

MILLER
If we don't get off this beach,
we're gonna die on this beach!

His words sink in. The men know it, of course -- but hearing it hammers it home.

SOLDIER #4
Any shit's better than the shit
we're in! What do we do, sir?

MILLER
Gather weapons! Whatever we got! Drag 'em in off the sand if you have to!

SARGE
Where's your B.A.R., Reiben?

REIBEN
Bottom of the channel, Sarge! Miserable bitch tried to drown me!

SARGE
Find a replacement!

The word is relayed up and down the line, voices hollering:

VOICES
Weapons!...Weapons!...Hey, bring 'em up!...We need weapons!...

The rumor of a breakout spurs the troops. The fact that <u>any</u> action is being taken has a galvanizing effect. Guns and ammo are gathered, handed along, made ready. Men are even braving the German bullets to dash out and pull weapons in off the sand -- a machine gun here, a bazooka there, M-1s, pistols...

MILLER
Who's got bangalores?

VOICES
(up and down the line)
Bangalore!...Who's got bangers?...
We're lookin' for bangalores!...

MELLISH AND CAPARZO

are eyeing a .30 caliber machine gun lying about ten yards out like a pair of hungry dogs eyeing a bone.

MELLISH
You run faster'n I do.

CAPARZO
You're a smaller target.

MELLISH
(beat)
Shit.

They <u>both</u> break cover, racing out to grab the weapon...

RESUME MILLER

as someone hands him a Thompson with spare clips. Weapons are

coming in from both directions, along with men willing to use them. PVT. BOYLE shows up with a flamethrower still strapped to his back. Miller's impressed:

MILLER
You brought that all the way in?

BOYLE
Not by choice, sir! I'd have dumped the damn thing if the buckle hadn't jammed!

He proves his point by yanking on the buckle. Frozen solid. ANGLE SHIFTS as a PAIR OF ENGINEERS arrive with bangalore torpedoes (long tubes filled with TNT):

ENGINEER #1
Bangalores comin' in!

SARGE
What say we blow a hole in the goddamn wire?

The procedure begins: many hands pitch in, attaching the bangalores end-to-end and feeding them out onto the shingle toward the German barbed wire.

We are watching the true miracle of D-Day take place: when all the planning failed, when all the calculations proved wrong, when the whole damn thing fell on its ass...it was the common soldier who made it work anyway. They seized the day in dribs and drabs, desperately improvising their way to victory in small rag-tag groups like this one:

Men are gearing up, knocking sand out of their weapons, working the bolts, loading ammo.

Mellish and Caparzo are oiling the kinks out of their newly-acquired machine gun. Mellish mutters darkly:

MELLISH
We really gonna do this?

CAPARZO
As opposed to what? Sit here till the Krauts pick us off?

THE BANGALORE

inches closer to its mark, nearing the barbed wire.

MILLER

is riveted. Wade appears at his side with his medic's pack and M-1, preparing to go. Reiben's loading a B.A.R.:

(CONTINUED)

REIBEN
Captain? Can I put in for a transfer?

MILLER
Sure, meet me at the top, we'll start the paperwork.

The bangalore's in place. Miller gives the signal. The engineer twists the detonator handle. BOOM! The dust clears, revealing a gap in the barricade.

MILLER
Let's go!

Miller heaves himself onto the seawall and races for the gap, followed by a dozen men. Those remaining behind OPEN FIRE up at the cliffs, trying to provide cover.

The German machine guns re-direct their fire, tracking the runners. Several men are hit and go down, one body tangling in the barbed wire. The others plunge through the gap --

SWAMP FLATS/OTHER SIDE OF BARBED WIRE

-- and they're through, racing like crazy across the swamp flats toward the escarpment.

AT THE SHINGLE

A CHEER rises up from the men who stayed behind. They just witnessed the impossible. A lot of guys are trading "if-they-did-it-why-can't-we" looks. One guy turns to his buddy:

SOLDIER #5
Screw this. If I'm gonna die, it's gonna be getting up that slope.

He lunges over the top and races for the wire. That's all it takes -- another dozen men break cover, following his lead.

THE SWAMP FLATS

Miller's group is nearing the cliffs. BOOM! One guy steps on a mine and gets blown sky-high. A few frantic looks: shit, we're in a minefield! Never mind, keep going...

...and they do, finally reaching the escarpment in one piece, out of the line of the machine guns above. Miller peers up:

THE ESCARPMENT

is a maze of deep winding furrows caused by erosion. Plenty of room to hide. Especially if you're German.

(CONTINUED)

The GIs start up the slope, sticking to the deepest furrows, using them as natural trenches...working their way uphill... leap-frogging positions and keeping low...pausing briefly to assess the blind turns...taking chances and dashing out...

The all-encompassing blanket of noise on the beach has receded up here. The SOUND OF SPECIFIC MACHINE GUN POSITIONS are heard somewhere above, along with the huge WHUMP of an 88mm cannon.

SARGE
(quietly)
We take those guns out, it could ease things up below.

Miller nods. They press on. BOOM! Another mine. Dirt cascades down. The dead man's helmet goes rolling and bouncing downhill past the men below. Everybody rises, keeps moving...

ANGLE ON GAP

...and we come to a gap in the path. Between here and there is nothing but 30 or 40 feet of open space to cross on a blind angle. Problem is, you have no idea what's waiting for you until you poke your head out.

The MACHINE GUNS sound close now. We're also hearing the POOF-POOF-POOF of mortars nearby.

Miller motions everybody to wait. He grabs a bayonet and digs a tiny mirror (cracked in the center) from an inside pocket. He looks at the men, eyes falling on Mellish, who's chewing gum and watching him with puzzlement. Miller unceremoniously digs the gum out of Mellish's mouth, uses the gum to affix the mirror to the tip of the bayonet.

He eases the bayonet out, angling it around to see:

REFLECTION IN MIRROR

It's shaky but effective: about 20 yards up is a SAND-BAGGED EMPLACEMENT WITH TWO MACHINE GUN TEAMS blasting away at the beach below. Next to their position are TWO MORTAR TEAMS popping shells at the sky, plus some ADDITIONAL INFANTRY.

The mirror angles slowly up, giving us the final bit of bad news: ten yards past the machine guns is a CONCRETE BUNKER with the MUZZLE OF AN 88 looming from the long horizontal firing port. Another shell fires. WHUMP!

GERMAN MACHINE GUN NEST

TEAM #1 is hammering away at the beach. The SOLDIER feeding the ammo belt catches a glint of Miller's mirror in his eye. He glances over, nudging the MACHINE GUNNER as:

(CONTINUED)

MILLER

pulls the mirror back in.

MILLER
Two machine guns and two mortars about twenty yards up. 88 in a bunker just beyond.

SARGE
We've got no angle to snuff those machine guns. We've got to get across. There's a perfect firing position over there.

He points across the gap at the next outcropping. Getting there means crossing that 30 or 40 feet of open ground. Miller nods. Sarge picks at random:

SARGE
Go in threes. You, you, and you.

MILLER
They're aiming at the beach, you can get across before they react. Be prepared to give the rest of us covering fire. We'll need it.

The THREE MEN nod, take a moment to get ready, then race into the open across the gap. MACHINE GUN FIRE rips into them halfway across --

MACHINE GUN NEST

Team #1 has re-positioned its gun and is now HAMMERING AWAY at the gap below.

MILLER AND THE OTHERS

watch horrified as the three GIs get chewed to pieces. The FIRING STOPS, leaving two men dead and one screaming on the ground. A FINAL BURST takes him out.

MILLER
God damn it!

Miller and Sarge exchange a look. It's a shooting gallery, but it's the only way -- they've got to get across:

SARGE
This time with suppressing fire!
Next three! You, you, and you!

The TRIO take deep breaths, then race into the gap. The others lunge out and OPEN FIRE on the Germans, but it's a bad angle.

(CONTINUED)

The Germans respond by pouring a HAIL OF BULLETS into the gap, nailing all three men on the run. The GIs sprawl/tumble to the ground in a storm of blood and shattering rock.

Miller and the others duck back. Shit. Miller hesitates, anguished, knowing the madness of losing even more men...but:

MILLER
Next three.

Jackson looks to Reiben and HARGIS.

JACKSON
That'd be us.

Jackson prepares himself, wrapping the sling of his scope-mounted sniper rifle around his arm.

JACKSON
Cap'n, tell you what. Get us across, I'll nail that sonofabitch for you.

MILLER
I'm counting on it.

REIBEN
Captain, about that transfer?

MILLER
Later.

The men psyche themselves up, waiting for:

MILLER
Go!

The three men dash into the open. Miller and the others provide SUPPRESSING FIRE.

The Germans OPEN FIRE, raking bullets into the gap. Hargis is hit and goes down screaming. Jackson and Reiben go sprawling, praying for any cover at all. There isn't much to hide behind out here -- just the bodies of the previous six men.

For the moment, it's enough. Reiben and Jackson are pinned down behind the bodies, flat as human beings can be. Bullets graze the tops of their helmets and rip the corpses in front of their noses. It's adrenalized, high-intensity madness, with everybody yelling and screaming at once:

MILLER
SHUT UP! EVERYBODY SHUT UP!

Miller's mind races. Bullets chatter and rip. He notices that Jackson's closest to the outcropping at the other end.

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
Jackson! You ready to get across?

JACKSON
Any time's good, sir!

REIBEN
What about me?

MILLER
You stay down!

Miller steps into the open. Events play out in fractions of seconds:

THE GERMAN MACHINE GUNNER

sees Miller just standing there, a perfect target, swings the machine gun toward him.

MILLER

stands firm as BULLETS RIP THE GROUND in his direction --

MILLER
GO!

-- and Jackson's up and running. Miller throws himself back, barely making it, his bootheel getting BLOWN OFF as Sarge and the others drag him in.

Jackson makes it across the gap to the outcropping. The German gunner tries to readjust, but he's too late.

The pissed-off gunner KEEPS FIRING, battering the gap with bullets, trying to nail Reiben, trying to nail anything. Reiben's screaming and yelling, everybody's going crazy...

...except Jackson. He's the calm at the center of the storm. He works his rifle bolt, raises the scope to his eye --

RIFLE SCOPE POV

-- and tries to pin the German gunner in the crosshairs. It's not easy; there's a lot of motion and smoke in the frame.

JACKSON

tries to tune out the noise and fury around him, especially:

REIBEN
GODDAMN IT, ROY, DON'T YOU FORGET ABOUT ME! C'MON, BUDDY, PULL MY ASS OUT OF THIS! I'M BEGGING YOU, ROY, OH, JESUS CHRIST...

JACKSON
(trying to concentrate)
Shut up and keep your head down.

MILLER
Jackson? Do you have a shot?

A pause, everybody holding their breath, waiting for a reply:

JACKSON
Send the next three over!

Jackson squeezes the trigger and --

-- the German gunner's head snaps back as the bullet exits the back of his helmet. SPANG! His partner is stunned, shoves the body aside, grabs the weapon to take over...

The NEXT THREE GIs break from cover, racing across. Reiben scrambles to his feet, sprinting for dear life...

Jackson squeezes off another shot, nailing the second German. The man pitches over, machine gun CHATTERING uselessly at the sky. A THIRD GERMAN runs up, shouting to the others --

GERMAN #3
DIE FLANKE! DIE FLANKE!

-- and Jackson drops him too. Three for three.

That's it. Without that machine gun, the German flank is wide open. The Americans surge up the gap with a wild cry, storming the German position with everything they've got.

The battle is short and fierce:

MACHINE GUN TEAM #2 frantically tries shifting their gun to the gap, but bullets cut them down. Their supporting INFANTRY scramble to cover the flank. THE MORTAR TEAMS scatter for their weapons, RETURNING FIRE...

Mellish and Caparzo slam their machine gun down and OPEN FIRE, raking Germans off their feet...

Reiben advances with his B.A.R., blowing HUGE HOLES across the tops of the German sandbags, killing two of the enemy...

Miller and his men swarm the German position. Soldiers on both sides are cut down in the span of eyeblinks -- but the Germans are flatly overwhelmed.

Pvt. Boyle has the final word -- he hoses the area with his flamethrower, frying anything that still moves. A WALL OF FLAME mushrooms skyward on a column of black smoke.

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
BUNKER!

The GIs keeps going, racing for the bunker. RIFLE AND MACHINE GUN FIRE ERUPTS from within, taking down a few men --

-- but Miller and the rest are too fast, slamming into position at the bunker's base. Miller signals for grenades. Pins are popped. The GIs lob the grenades into the bunker through the horizontal firing port above their heads and --

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM! CONCUSSIVE BLASTS leap from the port, trailed by billowing smoke. The GIs jump to their feet, SPRAYING SMALL ARMS FIRE through the bunker port just to make goddamn sure...

...and then it's over. All that's left now is the slow, dazed aftershock of terror and adrenalin. Wade hurries to the aid of a wounded man moaning on the ground.

Miller and the others look around, stunned -- we did it. We're alive. After the beach, it's more than any of them expected. Nobody says anything, because they're really aren't words to express the moment. We're here. It's a fact.

SARGE (O.S.)
Oh my God...

Miller turns, follows Sarge's gaze.

SARGE
...that's quite a view.

ANGLE SHIFTS to reveal the beach below and the ocean beyond. Allied ships crowd the horizon. Closer to shore, everything in the water seems to be shattered and burning. Subsequent waves of landing craft are threading through the carnage and hitting the beach. Troops are still running for the safety of the shingle by the hundreds. Shells are bursting. Fire and smoke is everywhere. It's horrible...mind-boggling...magnificent.

MILLER
Yes it is. Quite a view.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - WAR DEPARTMENT - WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

...and the BOOMING CLATTER of machine guns and artillery transforms into the BOOMING CLATTER of typewriter keys slamming onto a field of pale yellow paper:

"WE REGRET TO INFORM YOU OF THE DEATH OF YOUR SON
LT. DAVID J. RYAN, KILLED IN ACTION 6 JUNE 1944
DURING THE ALLIED INVASION OF EUROPE..."

(CONTINUED)

THE TELEGRAM

lands atop a stack of identical telegrams in the "out" box on some unseen typist's desk...

...and the stack is picked up by a MAN'S HANDS, transferred to a rolling cart. He pushes the cart along, pausing at another desk. Another stack is picked up, transferred to the cart...

A LONG ROW OF DESKS

...and we reveal the cart being pushed along by an ELDERLY CIVILIAN MAN making his rounds. It would be quiet as a library in here if not for the CLATTERING of typewriters...

CAPTAIN ELLIS

returns to his desk with a cup of coffee to find the elderly civilian man transferring the latest stacks from his cart. Ellis sits, starts sifting through the telegrams. One catches his eye. He raises it, peering intently, murmurs:

ELLIS
Ryan?

Something rings a bell. He grabs a master file, scans down lists of names, finds what he's looking for. He looks up and sees COLONEL RAMSEY passing by with an AIDE.

ELLIS
Colonel Ramsey? Sir, there's something you should know about.

INT - GENERAL MARSHALL'S OFFICE - DAY

GENERAL GEORGE C. MARSHALL, Army Chief of Staff, has his nose in the Ryan file. Colonel Ramsey and Captain Ellis stand by, along with SEVERAL OTHER SUBORDINATES. The office is a busy nexus bustling with SECRETARIES AND STAFF.

COL. RAMSEY
Put bluntly, General, three brothers have been killed within the span of two weeks. One on Saipan, two at Normandy.

GEN. MARSHALL
(to Ellis)
We have confirmation?

ELLIS
Yes, sir. All three telegrams were approved for delivery.

(CONTINUED)

GEN. MARSHALL
I'm glad you caught them. Let's arrange for something a little more personal, yes?

ELLIS
Of course, sir.

GEN. MARSHALL
(refers to file)
What about the fourth brother? The youngest son, James...

COL. RAMSEY
He went in with the 101st Airborne the night of the invasion. He's somewhere behind enemy lines.

GEN. MARSHALL
Alive?

COL. RAMSEY
There's been no contact.

A pensive beat. Marshall closes the file, lays it down.

GEN. MARSHALL
We all know Ike's policy on this. We can't have a repeat of the Sullivan brothers tragedy, not if we can help it.
(beat)
You have my authorization. Let's set this in motion.

CUT TO:

HORSE'S HOOVES come thundering past camera --

EXT - FARM COUNTRY - MANSFIELD, OHIO - EARLY MORNING

-- as a beautiful 17 YEAR-OLD GIRL spurs her mount along a ridge overlooking a farm, reddish blonde hair flying in the breeze. The countryside is stunningly green, and dreamy with the last of the early morning mist.

The girl and horse gallop along, owning the moment, just the two of them. She suddenly reins in, seeing:

A car in the distance. An olive green Army staff car is traveling the country highway below.

The girl stares at the car. Fear slowly blossoming, though she doesn't even know why. Maybe it's because she's never seen an Army staff car out this way.

The car turns in off the highway, kicking up dust along the private road leading to the farm. The girl's heart jumps. She spurs her horse down the ridge, racing the car toward:

THE RYAN FARM

A white farmhouse surrounded by miles of corn and alfalfa. A flag in the window displays four blue stars, each representing a family member in the armed services. A RADIO PLAYS SOFTLY, giving us Johnny Hartman singing Irving Berlin's "Remember."

THE PORCH

We find an OLD MAN (70's) dozing on the porch swing with a DOG at his feet. It's the dog who stirs first, raising his head at the car's approach. The old man lifts his chin off his chest.

MRS. RYAN (mid to late 40's) steps from the house with a tray of iced tea. She sees the car coming, knows it can't be good news. She sets the tray down, readying herself for what may come. She looks over and sees her HUSBAND step from the barn.

The car pulls up with a PRIVATE at the wheel. An ARMY OFFICER emerges...accompanied by the LOCAL PASTOR.

THE GIRL

comes galloping toward the house, stops. The men from the car are talking to her mother. The girl can't hear the words, but she clearly hears her mother's heartbroken SOBBING cut the morning air.

The girl jumps off the horse, running toward the house with her heart in her throat as we

CUT TO:

EXT - NORMANDY FIELD - DAY

An ARTILLERY BARRAGE rains down. A COMPANY OF AMERICANS is pinned down by an unseen German force lurking in the treeline a few hundred yards ahead. The GIs are miserable, dug in amongst the shell craters, FIRING BACK as best they can.

Wade is caring for an INJURED SOLDIER, squeezing a bag of clear plasma. The man's BUDDIES are clustered around, pitching in as best they can -- one guy's holding a cigarette for him, a second is squeezing his hand, a third is jamming a rifle into the ground bayonet-first as a makeshift I.V. stand.

INJURED SOLDIER
Am I really gonna be all right?

WADE
I told you so, didn't I?
(glances down)
Hey, the work's guaranteed. Nobody's asked for their money back yet.

This brings a weak smile -- the man's reassured. Wade hangs the plasma bag from the rifle as Miller comes running...

MILLER
Where we dug in?

WADE
(cocks his head)
That way, sir! Just over there!

...and WE FOLLOW Miller, crouching and ducking, hurling himself into the crater occupied by his men. He finds himself wallowing in sludge, recoils from the stench:

MILLER
What the hell are we in?

REIBEN
Shit, sir!

MILLER
Shit?

JACKSON
It's farm country, Captain!

MILLER
What were they raising, elephants?

They duck as a SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS send dirt and sludge rocketing skyward -- and raining back down again.

REIBEN
Now it's raining shit. How nice.

CAPARZO
Remind you of home?

Reiben throws Caparzo a look -- drop dead. Miller hollers to SGT. DONOVAN hunched with his radio in the next crater:

MILLER
DONOVAN! WHERE'S OUR GODDAMN ARTILLERY?

DONOVAN
THIS IS OUR GODDAMN ARTILLERY!

Miller cocks his head -- did I hear you right?

MILLER
THIS IS OURS? HAVE YOU TOLD THEM THEY'RE DROPPING A LITTLE BIT SHORT? THE GERMANS ARE THAT WAY!

DONOVAN
I'M TRYING, SIR!

Reiben rears up next to Miller, shouting:

REIBEN
TELL THOSE MORONS TO WALK IT UP INTO THE TREELINE SO WE CAN GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE AND GET INTO CAEN!

MILLER
(stares at him)
When did you get so gung ho?

REIBEN
Not gung ho, sir. I just think we should be the first into Caen is all.

MILLER
Why, what's in Caen?

REIBEN
Lingerie, sir.

SARGE
Lingerie!

REIBEN
Caen's famous for it, Sarge. One might go so far as to say it's the lingerie capital of the world.

CAPARZO
How do you know so much about it?

REIBEN
Hell, I grew up in lingerie!

MELLISH
That's more than we needed to know!

REIBEN
Not wearing it, idiot! It's my family's business going back three generations! We got the best store in Manhattan, I worked there from the time I could crawl! We carry Caen lingerie, it's the finest there is! It's all I been thinking about since the invasion!

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
There's a war on. Good chance they're not still making lingerie.

REIBEN
They'll always make lingerie, sir. It's one of the three basic needs of man -- food, shelter, something silky that laces up the side...

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM! Artillery shells fall close. Fertilizer rains down. Miller rises, spitting sludge, screaming:

MILLER
DONOVAN, GODDAMN IT!

DONOVAN
I THINK IT'S GETTING SORTED OUT NOW, SIR! COMMAND'S ON THE LINE, THEY WANT YOU BACK AT H.Q.!

MILLER
ME? THEY WANT ME?

DONOVAN
THEY SAY ON THE DOUBLE, SIR!

MILLER
Could be the war's over.

SARGE
Let us know. We'll be here holding our breath.

Miller hauls himself out of the crater, takes off running.

CUT TO:

EXT - REAR AREA/FIELD H.Q. - DAY

EXPLOSIONS RUMBLE in the distance. Vehicles and men are everywhere. A jeep veers to a stop. Miller gets out, motions for the DRIVER to wait. He heads for a scorched, bullet-riddled GERMAN BUNKER being used as a temporary H.Q.

INT - FIELD H.Q./GERMAN BUNKER - DAY

Miller enters, salutes a MAJOR:

MILLER
Sir, Captain Miller reporting as ordered.

MAJOR
Captain. Come with me.

Miller is led deeper into the bunker, where he finds a DOZEN OFFICERS with as many AIDES, RUNNERS, and RADIOMEN. Very busy. LT. COLONEL ANDERSON is in command, talking on a field phone:

ANDERSON
...I understand your problem, but if we don't get that equipment off-loaded by 0600, we're gonna have an entire division between here and Caen with its ass hanging out of its pants...

As Miller waits, we see how dazed with exhaustion he is. It's all he can do keep from falling down. His eyes fall on a cup of coffee and a half-eaten sandwich. Judging from his look, the sandwich and coffee are sexier than Betty Grable.

ANDERSON
...no, just have them hold right there until we get those tanks up from the rear. And keep me posted.

He hangs up, turns to Miller, notices the shit smell:

ANDERSON
That's quite an aroma. How are you holding up, Captain?

MILLER
Nothing a shower wouldn't fix, sir. That and a night's sleep in Caen.

ANDERSON
That's affirmative on the shower, but I'm afraid Caen will have to wait. Same goes for your company re-org, I'm afraid.

MILLER
Sir?

ANDERSON
Fact is, we've got a special assignment for you. This comes straight from the top.
(scans the order)
There's a Private Ryan, James F., went in with the 101st. You're to take a patrol, find him, and bring him back to the beach for embarkation to England.

Beat. Miller's trying to process it, but it's not making much sense. He chooses his words carefully:

MILLER
Sir? I'm not one for questioning my orders, but...may I ask why?

ANDERSON
He's the last of four brothers. The other three were killed in action.

Miller's still not sure he gets it. The look on his face plainly says: "Yeah? So?" The Major jumps in:

MAJOR
Eisenhower himself instituted this policy after the Sullivan brothers died on the Juneau. He feels our military can't be in the habit of wiping out entire families.

Miller doesn't know quite how to respond.

ANDERSON
You have something to say, Captain?

MILLER
If I may speak freely?
(Anderson nods)
Well, sir...this doesn't make one goddamn bit of sense.

Nearby personnel stiffen, throw cautious glances.

ANDERSON
How so?

MILLER
How many of our dead did we leave on the beach three days ago? Two thousand? More? And how many more before we reach Berlin?

ANDERSON
I take it you're without sympathy in this situation.

Miller plunges ahead, letting his exhaustion wind him up:

MILLER
Sympathy? I had my whole company shot out from under me. They have families, too, I don't see anybody crying for them. Now I'm supposed to risk the few men I have left to go babysit some private? It's nuts, sir, plain and simple. And it's got nothing to do with winning this war.

(CONTINUED)

Silence in the room. Men are holding their breath, waiting to see what happens. Anderson responds almost gently:

ANDERSON
I know you're tired, Captain. We all are. And we all have our orders. I expect you to carry out yours.

Beat. Miller's said all there is to say, except:

MILLER
Yes, sir. Where do we find this Private Ryan?

CUT TO:

EXT - NORMANDY FIELD - DAY

The site of the previous shelling. The Germans in the treeline have been routed; the Americans are moving on. In fact, a HUGE COLUMN is being funneled through here now that the road is open; TRUCKS LOADED WITH TROOPS are grinding past in an endless line, supported by SHERMANS and HALF-TRACKS.

We find Miller's men laughing it up, sharing c-rations and chocolate around, conversation fast and loose:

REIBEN
He don't show up soon, we're gonna miss the trucks...

JACKSON
Relax, they won't go without us.

MELLISH
Me, I'll walk if I have to. One night in a real bed. That's all I want out of life...

CAPARZO
Brother, that sounds good.

MELLISH
...a <u>feather</u> bed. With big pillows. And breakfast on a tea tray.

WADE
We're still a long way from Caen. I doubt the Germans are just going to let us stroll in.

MELLISH
They better not get between me and that feather bed, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

Jackson hollers at a passing truck:

JACKSON
Hicks! Get that deck of cards warmed up! I'm gonna clean out your whole platoon!

REIBEN
Hey, there he is!

They see Miller being driven up the column in a jeep. Miller gets out, approaches them.

CAPARZO
Captain! We been waiting on ya! We got our traveling shoes on!

MILLER
Good, you'll need 'em. Thing is, we're not headed that way. We're taking a little detour.

REIBEN
Detour?

Miller stops, faces the men, breaks the bad news:

MILLER
There's this Private Ryan with the 101st. We gotta go find him and bring him back to the beach.

Pause. The men just stare.

WADE
If that's a joke, sir, we're still waiting on the punchline.

MILLER
No joke. Seems all his brothers got killed, so that makes him special. They gave him a ticket home.

The men erupt with indignation:

REIBEN
What is that, the Irish sweepstakes?

MELLISH
My mind is boggling.

CAPARZO
Hey, Captain, if my relatives croak, do I get to go home too?

(CONTINUED)

SARGE
Everybody settle!
(turns to Miller)
Where is this Ryan?

MILLER
Ste.-Mere-Eglise. Or maybe St.-Lo. Could be Carentan. Perhaps Ramelle. Maybe he's hiding in the crack of your Uncle Hector's ass. Maybe he's dead in a ditch, or wandering the countryside with amnesia.

CAPARZO
Wish I had amnesia, I could forget this is happening...

WADE
What are you saying, sir?

MILLER
I'm saying the Airborne got scattered all over hell and gone, they don't know where he is.

JACKSON
There's your punchline, Wade.

MELLISH
Bada-boom.

SARGE
Well, where's he's supposed to be?

MILLER
They don't know that either.
(off their looks)
It's a big war, you expect them to keep track of every little private?

CAPARZO
Are they gonna find out?

MILLER
Soon as they do they'll contact us by radio, assuming the radios work, which they don't.

REIBEN
Great. Until then we'll just wander around France hoping we bump into him.

MELLISH
Good plan. Do we wave our hankies when he sails back to England?

MILLER
That's optional, but might be very touching. I'm glad there are no further questions...

REIBEN
Just one, sir. What idiot dreamed this one up?

MILLER
(deadpan)
Eisenhower.

Miller turns and walks off with Sarge. Reiben calls after him:

REIBEN
Him? Again? I'm beginning not to trust this Eisenhower so much!

MELLISH
Me neither. Ever notice how German that name sounds? "Eisenhower?" Think about it.

An outbound truck slows. TURLEY hollers out the window:

TURLEY
Hey! You jokers comin' to Caen, or what?

REIBEN
Screw off, Turley!

TURLEY
What? What I say?

MELLISH
Go on, hit the gas, you schmuck!

The truck rumbles on with our boys hurling empty c-ration cans and candy wrappers after it.

MILLER AND SARGE

come to the waiting jeep. Miller lays a map on the hood, indicates their present position:

MILLER
Here's us, near the beach...
(traces a line west)
Ryan's gonna be west of us, somewhere on the peninsula. Their drop-zones are indicated...at least what should have been their drop-zones.

(CONTINUED)

SARGE
Ste.-Marie-du-Mont looks closest.

MILLER
Who knows, we could get lucky.
(indicates the men)
Get 'em cleaned up and fed. I'll meet you on the beach in an hour, the supply depot at Easy Green.

SARGE
Where are you going?

MILLER
Get us a translator.

CUT TO:

EXT - INTELLIGENCE TENT - OMAHA BEACH - DAY

A tent in the midst of the staging area. Miller appears, showered and in fresh clothes, heading into --

THE TENT

-- where he finds THREE CORPORALS working at map tables like studious nerds the day before finals. They're gridding maps, covering them in plastic. Tedious, detailed work.

MILLER
Who's Upham?

UPHAM looks up, a thin 24 year-old with glasses.

UPHAM
Uh, me, sir. That's me. I'm Upham.

MILLER
I'm told you speak flawless French and German.

UPHAM
Well, my French has a slight accent. My German's clean. It has a touch of the Bavarian.

MILLER
Fine, grab your gear. You've been reassigned to me.

UPHAM
Reassigned, sir?

Miller flashes the written order. I own your ass.

MILLER
We're going to Ste.-Marie-du-Mont.

UPHAM
(blinks)
There are Germans there, sir.

MILLER
That's my understanding.

UPHAM
But I'm a translator. I translate.

MILLER
That's the idea.

UPHAM
But...I've never been in combat, sir. In fact, I haven't fired a rifle since basic.

MILLER
It'll come back to you.

UPHAM
(hesitates)
May I bring my typewriter? See, I'm writing a book and I...

Miller stops him with a look -- you gotta be kidding.

UPHAM
How about a pencil?

MILLER
A small one.

CUT TO:

EXT - OMAHA BEACH - EASY GREEN STAGING AREA - DAY

Here comes Upham, trying to keep up with Miller. Upham's grappling with his pack, his M-1, and his helmet -- all of which seem to be trying to get away from him.

MILLER'S MEN

are waiting, exhaustion etched in their faces (though they're a lot cleaner). They see Miller approach, trailed by Upham.

MELLISH
Who's the drip?

SARGE
Translator.

They all fall in step behind Miller, trailing him through all the activity (and hemming in an increasingly nervous Upham). Reiben moves up alongside Miller:

REIBEN
Captain, I been thinking this whole thing over, and it seems to me you need a really top-notch B.A.R. man on a mission like this...

MILLER
You are top-notch.

REIBEN
...no, I'm not, sir, not really. Morgan in C company's much better, I think you should make <u>him</u> volunteer for this, you know, so as to maximize your chances for success, plus he's Irish, so he speaks the lingo...

MILLER
Reiben, forget about the lingerie.

REIBEN
...aw, <u>c'mon,</u> sir! You can't lemme get this close to Caen and just yank it away! It's cruel and unusual...

MELLISH
(muttering)
<u>You're</u> cruel and unusual.

REIBEN
...it's like telling an Arab he can't go to Mecca, you see what I'm saying, sir?

MILLER
Come talk to me when you're an Arab. Now fall in.

Reiben drops back. The others offer sympathetic looks -- nice try. Miller approaches a stressed-out BATTALION MOTOR SERGEANT overseeing an endless parade of VEHICLES being offloaded from LCTs -- DUKWs, tanks, troop carriers, you name it.

SERGEANT
GET THOSE GODDAMN HALF-TRACKS OUT OF THERE!

PRIVATE (O.S.)
They're blocked in!

SERGEANT
UNBLOCK 'EM, YOU IDIOT!
(notices Miller)
Captain? What can I do for you?

MILLER
I have a requisition for a truck.

SERGEANT
Sorry, sir, fresh outta trucks, how 'bout a '38 Ford roadster, V-8, red with black interior?

MILLER
White walls?

SERGEANT
No white-walls, sir, there's a war on.
(hollers offscreen)
NOT THERE, MULLET HEAD! WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

MILLER
A half-track? Anything?

SERGEANT
Wish I could help, sir, but Division's got me pumping everything on wheels straight to the front. Try back tomorrow?

MILLER
What about those?

Miller indicates a pair of jeeps parked nearby. The lead jeep displays general's insignia on the front bumper -- a red "license plate" with three gold stars.

SERGEANT
Oh, no. See the red tag with the pretty stars? Those jeeps belong to General Craig. You even breathe on 'em, they'll court martial me.

JACKSON
C'mon, partner, we gotta get to Saint Mary Doomont...

UPHAM
(correcting him)
Ste.-Marie-du-Mont...

JACKSON
...whatever, you gonna make us walk?

SERGEANT
What's in Ste.-Marie besides Germans?

MILLER
We gotta find some kid named Ryan and send him home.

SERGEANT
Senator's son?

MILLER
His brothers were killed in action. Command wants him out of here.

The sergeant pauses, affected by this.

SERGEANT
All his brothers?
(Miller nods)
Damn. I got brothers.

The gears are turning in his head, weighing the good deed versus the consequences. He peers at the jeeps.

SERGEANT
I'd say lose the stars. Too nice a target.

Miller follows his gaze to:

THE GENERAL'S THREE STAR INSIGNIA PLATE

Beat. A bootheel SLAMS into frame and kicks the plate clean off. ANGLE WIDENS as Miller piles into the jeep with Sarge at the wheel, Reiben and Jackson in back. Both jeeps ROAR OFF. The motor sergeant watches them go...

...as behind him, GENERAL CRAIG AND HIS STAFF exit a tent to find the jeeps gone and the insignia tag on the ground.

GENERAL CRAIG
SERGEANT! WHERE THE HELL ARE MY GODDAMN JEEPS?

EXT - OMAHA BEACH TABLEAU - DAY

The two jeeps go winding off through the staging area as WE BOOM UP to reveal the biggest invasion in history:

The scope of it is stunning. The beach is covered with mountains of supplies, arriving troops, streams of vehicles, hundreds of barrage balloons overhead. Offshore, a massive Mulberry port is being built. Beyond that, thousands of ships and boats. Landward, the smoke of hundreds of fires hangs on

the horizon. EXPLOSIONS RUMBLE, some distant, some closer.

Miller and his tiny group weave their way through the middle of it, eventually lost from view as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - FRENCH COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Here come the two jeeps, passing (sometimes weaving, honking, and bulling their way through) a column of American VEHICLES and INFANTRYMEN headed in the same direction. German vehicles lie shattered and burning on both sides of the road.

JEEP #1

Sarge is at the wheel, trying to make headway. Miller's next to him, focused on the map. Jackson calls forward:

JACKSON
Cap'n? I ask a question? Where you figure on putting Private Ryan, sir?
(off Miller's silence)
It's just that both vehicles seem to be full. I was wondering if you're expecting to have more room on the way back?

REIBEN
Worse comes to worse, we could shoot the translator.

MILLER
There will be no shooting the translator. He speaks French and his German has a touch of the Bavarian.

Reiben and Jackson trade a look -- too bad.

JEEP #2

Upham's squeezed to one corner of the back seat because Caparzo's taking up most of the room. Wade's driving, with Mellish riding shotgun. Upham tries to break the ice:

UPHAM
I'm Upham. Corporal Upham.
(beat)
You don't have to salute or anything. I know all that breaks down in combat.

Caparzo swivels his head, peering at Upham as if he were an insect. Mellish turns around, nails him with a ferrety gaze.

(CONTINUED)

MELLISH
There's only one reason you're along for this ride, Upham.

UPHAM
To translate?

MELLISH
As food, in case we get lost.

RESUME JEEP #1

Reiben's got his nose buried in a pocket Michelin guide of France.

REIBEN
Captain, gotta tell ya, the irony of this mission is killing me.

MILLER
How so?

REIBEN
It's like Beethoven. Greatest composer ever lived, right? Guy goes deaf. I mean, who'd he piss off? Here I am -- the Beethoven of ladies' foundation garments -- one step away from Caen, the center of the known lingerie universe. Instead, I'm going to Ste.-Marie-du-Mont to save some private who's probably already dead.

MILLER
There's gotta be a bright side, look for it.

REIBEN
Sir, you know what Ste.-Marie-du-Mont is famous for? Cheese. Says so right here. While everybody else is heading for Caen, we're off to the goddamn cheese capital of France. What could possibly be the bright side?

MILLER
Well, I, for one, like cheese.

They come to a fork in the road where traffic is snarled. An M.P. is directing vehicles, dealing with the bottleneck.

MILLER
How's the road to Ste.-Marie?

M.P.
Bad, sir. Germans are knocking hell out of our traffic. I'd avoid it if possible.

Miller looks to Sarge -- they have no choice.

SARGE
Let us through there, would you, Lieutenant?

The M.P. holds up traffic, waving them through as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - ROAD TO STE.-MARIE-DU-MONT - DAY

The jeeps come up the road. The route is becoming increasingly eerie and deserted, like a graveyard. They keep passing destroyed vehicles and strewn bodies. Shell craters mark the road and surrounding fields.

Miller raises his hand, motioning for a stop. Both jeeps pull over. He scans ahead with his binoculars.

SARGE
You think they got this road zeroed, sir?

They hear the DISTINCT THUMP OF AN 88mm CANNON.

MILLER
Yes!

Sarge jams it in gear, both jeeps peeling out as:

The SHELL SCREAMS IN. WHAM! A HUGE EXPLOSION blows a hole in the road behind them, geysering dirt skyward...

...and they keep going, racing up the road, veering like crazy as SHELL AFTER SHELL COMES SCREAMING DOWN, hammering the roadbed with one MASSIVE EXPLOSION after another...

...so they veer off the road, both jeeps bouncing/accelerating across the bare dirt fields, both drivers going balls-to-the-wall as they swerve wildly through a GAUNTLET OF EXPLOSIONS...

Wade's jeep takes a spray of shrapnel. Everybody ducks as the windshield shatters and the radiator grill perforates...

...and the shelling stops. Everything falls quiet as clouds of dust drift off across the fields.

The jeeps slow down. Wade's vehicle is trailing steam -- he's desperately nursing a sputtering, dying engine.

CAPARZO
How come they stopped? We out of range?

The ROAR OF AN AIRPLANE brings their heads around. An ME-109 rips into view from behind the treeline flying maybe 20 feet off the deck --

SARGE
Shit!

-- and OPENS FIRE with its wing-mounted machine guns. Twin rows of exploding dirt race across the field toward us as:

WADES'S JEEP

Caparzo grabs Upham. Everybody bails out except Wade, who stays at the wheel cranking the engine...

MELLISH
WADE!

SARGE'S JEEP

Sarge peels out, swerving wildly as the INCOMING MACHINE GUN FIRE misses them by inches...

...but the bullets rip Wade's jeep right up the center, blowing the hood clean off as Wade dives clear.

THE ME-109

churns through a tight, fast turn, coming around as:

WADE'S JEEP

Caparzo runs in, grabs the .30 caliber to salvage it. Mellish grabs Wade, hauls him away, everybody scattering to get clear as the ME-109 OPENS FIRE AGAIN --

CAPARZO
COVER!

-- and the jeep gets strafed a second time. This time the AMMO SATCHELS EXPLODE. The plane ROARS past, going after:

SARGE'S JEEP

which is taking wild evasive turns, everybody hanging on for dear life. The Messerschmitt OPENS FIRE AGAIN, its machine guns ripping massive furrows in the ground --

-- and chasing the jeep right into a ditch. They go in hard, the jeep sliding/tilting up onto its side as the men tumble clear. The plane ROARS past, flying so low it sends hay

swirling off the haystacks with its propwash --

-- and then it's gone, vanished behind the trees. Miller rises, the first to get his head on straight:

MILLER
Let's get the jeep out before the son of a bitch comes back!

Miller's group struggles to push the jeep over onto its wheels. Wade's group comes running and pitches in...

...and we hear the WHUMP of that goddamn 88 again. The men gaze up with "oh shit" written all over their faces...

The SHELL COMES SCREAMING IN. WHAM! A HUGE EXPLOSION of dirt leaps up some thirty yards to their left...

MILLER
PUSH!

...and they tilt the jeep over on its tires. It's still stuck in a ditch, but at least it's upright. Sarge jumps behind the wheel, cranks the engine, jams it in reverse, floors it -- and the tires spin wildly in the soft dirt. Miller throws himself against the hood, pushing for all he's worth:

MILLER
C'MON! YOU WANNA WALK?

Everybody converges on the lurching jeep, throwing their backs into it, pushing and heaving...

The 88 goes WHUMP again. The SECOND SHELL COMES SCREAMING IN, this time exploding thirty yards to their right...

SARGE
Captain! They got us zeroed!

Sarge mashes the accelerator. Everybody's putting their shoulders into it, straining to the limit --

UPHAM
Zeroed? That's bracketing right?

-- they ignore him, rocking the jeep, tires spinning --

UPHAM
I know about bracketing! I read it in a book! Isn't the next one supposed to land right on top of us?

MELLISH
Shaddap and push, you idiot!

(CONTINUED)

Sarge grinds gears, slams the gas. The jeep rocks forward and back again, almost gets out of the ditch, everybody pushing and hollering, Upham looking like he might wet himself...

WHUMP! There's the 88.

MILLER
GO!

Everybody scatters away from the jeep, hauling ass and gaining precious yards, hitting the dirt as:

WHAM! Direct hit. A STUNNING BLAST. The jeep cartwheels thirty feet in the air and SLAMS BACK DOWN AGAIN in a flaming heap.

THE MEN

raise their heads. Dirt and rocks pelt down.

CAPARZO
Well...at least the jeep's out of the ditch.

Suddenly we hear: POOF-POOF-POOF-POOF.

MILLER
Here come the mortars!

Miller hauls Upham to his feet. Everybody takes off running. Caparzo's toting the .30 cal. DOZENS OF MORTAR SHELLS come screaming down at their heels as the Germans "walk it up" across the field. The GIs desperately outrun the ADVANCING BARRAGE, everybody doing their best Jesse Owens toward --

THE TREELINE

-- where they go crashing through branches, finally collapsing to safety about thirty yards in. The mortars have stopped. The men are completely used up, struggling to catch their breath.

SARGE
Sound off if anybody's hit.
(looks around)
Anybody?

CAPARZO
(touching his nose)
I got a little nosebleed here...

...but that's it. They look around, amazement slowly dawning, fear and adrenalin draining away. Nobody's hit. Softly:

WADE
It's a miracle.

(CONTINUED)

Nobody laughs. Only Wade can say something like that and get away with it -- besides, they know he's right.

WADE
We've got an angel on our shoulder. Maybe this Ryan's good luck for us.

REIBEN
Let's not get carried away. He did get our jeeps blown up.

CAPARZO
Along with most of ammo.
(off Miller's look)
Sorry, sir. It was either grab the ammo or grab the machine gun.

MILLER
Sarge, break out the map. Caparzo, crank up the radio. I heard two 88s beyond that treeline, plus at least a dozen mortars.

UPHAM
You could tell all that from the sound?

MILLER
That's not all. There were nine gunners on the 88s, one had a broken heel on his boot, two had bratwurst for breakfast, one was named Fritz, the other Hans, maybe, I don't know, it's hard to tell.

Upham stares, almost believing it. He looks to the others for their reaction. Mellish is staring at him.

MELLISH
Hey, book boy. Look up "gullible."

Sarge vectors the map. Caparzo hands Miller the radio:

CAPARZO
Got the flyboys on the net, sir.

MILLER
(into radio)
Hornet four three, Baker One Able. I've got a target for you. Pair of Kraut 88s at sector three. From reference fox...down two, right one. Best approach is low from the east. They got an ME-109 buzzing around, so watch your tails, over.

A VOICE confirms through static. Miller hands the radio back.

SARGE
That lunatic in the 109 could give our planes a serious headache. Maybe we should try taking out those 88s ourselves.

MILLER
What, and risk winning the war? You know better than that, Sergeant. We've got our orders.

Beat. Sarge nods, looks to the others:

SARGE
You heard the man. Let's move out.

The men gather themselves as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - COUNTRYSIDE - FIELD - DAY

Hot and desultory, trees barely stirring. Miller's walking point. The others are some distance behind, spread out to avoid bunching. Everybody's wary, scanning the fields and woods. They've been walking for hours. Upham looks miserable, weighed down like a pack horse, slapping at horseflies.

Miller stops. Everybody freezes. Miller checks ahead with binoculars, turns and gives Sarge a few hand signals. Sarge nods, turns to the others:

SARGE
(voice low)
Two minute rest, other side of that wall. Be a good time to fill your canteens. Corporal, you do mine.

Sarge tosses his canteen to Upham, then goes off to join Miller. The men leave the field, clambering over a low stone wall and dropping exhausted to the other side. They shrug off their packs and gear in the shade of a tree.

There's a cool stream running by. Everybody makes a beeline for it (except Wade, who hands his canteen to Mellish and stays watchfully behind). The men kneel, splashing their faces and dousing their heads, then start filling canteens.

UPHAM

finds himself between Caparzo and Reiben. Upham tries Caparzo first, still trying to break the ice:

UPHAM
So? Where you from?

CAPARZO
Get stuffed.

So much for Caparzo. Upham turns to Reiben.

UPHAM
You?

REIBEN
Drop dead.

Okay, fine. Upham falls silent. Mellish is staring at him.

MELLISH
You writing a book, book boy?

UPHAM
As a matter of fact, yes.

Mellish and Upham rise, head back toward Wade.

MELLISH
Name's Mellish. Stanley Mellish, of the Chicago Mellishes. I'm small but wiry, with piercing, steel-gray eyes and chiseled, handsome features...don't you take notes?

WADE
What's your book about, Corporal?

UPHAM
It's still in the thinking stage.

The others return, collapsing in the shade:

REIBEN
I got your book. It's about some guys who get pulled out of the war and sent off on a wild goose chase after some Irish prick they never even met.

WADE
How do you know he's a prick?

REIBEN
How do you know he's not?

JACKSON
I hate to admit it, but Reiben could be right for once.

(CONTINUED)

CAPARZO
Yeah, what if this Ryan's a bigger shitface than that guy in Charlie company, what's-his-name...

MELLISH
...guy with the wart on his lip...

CAPARZO
...yeah, that guy, what if Ryan's a bigger prick than him?

MELLISH
I got a better ending. We never do find Ryan. Years go by. We're still out here looking for him, wandering like the Hebrews in the desert. Meanwhile he's back home, drinking cold beer and laying pipe with Betty Lou. Laughing at us.

CAPARZO
That's good. We need a title. How about "Captain Miller's Traveling Circus?" We get to be the clowns.

JACKSON
That's us. All we need are red noses and floppy shoes. Army issue.

Sarge appears on the other side of the wall.

SARGE
Gear up. Captain says we're wasting daylight.

Everybody rises, groaning, gearing up. Upham gazes off at Miller, hands Sarge his canteen over the wall.

UPHAM
Where's he from?

SARGE
Captain? You figure that out, you got a nice little prize. Three hundred bucks, last I heard.

WADE
2nd Battalion's got a pool going. Whoever guesses where the Captain's from and what he did as a civilian gets it all.

UPHAM
Somebody must know.

SARGE
Not even me, and we're like brothers. We went through North Africa and Sicily together.

Reiben lifts his B.A.R., heaves it across his shoulder.

REIBEN
No one's gonna win that money for the simple reason the Captain never was a civilian. They assembled him at O.C.S. out of spare parts from dead GIs. This I know for a fact.

They press on as we

CUT TO:

EXT - STE.-MARIE-DU-MONT - DUSK

A small town, mostly reduced to rubble. We're hearing sporadic SMALL ARMS FIRE, grenade and mortar EXPLOSIONS, some MEDIUM ARTILLERY in the hills. AMERICAN PARATROOPERS with the 101st crouch in doorways and hunker down in the rubble, exchanging GUNFIRE with an unseen German force. It's a sniper's alley.

Some FRENCH CIVILIANS dash across the street -- a MAN, a couple of WOMEN, several CHILDREN. They make it across, disappearing into the remains of a building.

ANGLE ON MILLER

as he enters frame f.g., flattening against a wall near a corner, his men closing ranks behind him. Miller pokes his head out, takes a quick mental snapshot (U.S. troops, gunfire, ruined buildings beyond) pulls back. SMACK! -- a bullet takes a chunk out of the brick near his head. Miller yells out:

MILLER
Thunder!

A pause, then:

VOICE (O.S.)
Flash! Come on across!

MILLER
(turns)
By twos. Upham, you're with me.

UPHAM
With you? You mean go across?

MILLER
Stay low, you'll be fine.

(CONTINUED)

Upham goes white as a sheet. Sarge pats his shoulder, gives him a nod -- just go. Miller eases forward, assessing the path, waving Upham to his side...

MILLER
Coming across!

...and off they go, racing across open ground as bullets chatter and rip, kicking dust off the cobblestones.

PARATROOPER'S POSITION

Miller and Upham make it across to find a beleaguered group of AIRBORNE TROOPS hunkered down in the rubble. PVT. GOLDMAN is ecstatic to see them. (The rest of Miller's men arrive by twos as the scene plays.)

PVT. GOLDMAN
Man, you guys are a sight for sore eyes, no lie! Sergeant Hill! Our relief showed up!

SGT. HILL
(scurries over)
How many are you?

MILLER
Just eight of us. We're not relief, sorry.

SGT. HILL
Then what the hell are you doing here?
(beat, realizing)
Hey! You the guys looking for Ryan?

Miller and his men react, surprised to hear Ryan's name.

MILLER
Yeah! Is he here?

SGT. HILL
No, but I think Captain Hamill's got some news on him for you! He was talking to Command a few hours ago, before we lost the radio.

MILLER
Where's Captain Hamill?

GOLDMAN
That's the bad part. He's on the other side of town. You wanna talk to him, you gotta get there first.

MILLER
You help us out?

SGT. HILL
(considers it)
Hastings, Goldman, with me! Let's show 'em the way!

They take off, scurrying/crouching/darting through the rubble, making their way up the street. They leap-frog positions, hug doorways for cover, scan windows and rooftops for snipers...

It's incredibly tense, boots scuffing over cobblestones, figures darting this way and that, looks traded and acknowledged, signals given -- I think we're clear till there, let's go, keep moving, you next...

It happens in a terrifying blur: A STORM OF GUNFIRE ERUPTS from windows across the street. A potato-masher bounces, EXPLODES. Something (shrapnel? bullet?) goes whang up under Reiben's helmet, smacks him high in the forehead, snaps his head back --

-- and instantly unleashes a stunning fountain of blood down his face. He gets knocked on his ass in the rubble, stunned at first, hands going to his face and coming away bloody, screaming as he realizes:

REIBEN
I'M HIT! I'M HIT!

It looks really bad, too. He's covered with blood -- face, hands, all down his shirt...

REIBEN
OH GOD, I'M HIT!

WADE
STAY DOWN!

Wade scrambles/belly-crawls toward Reiben. Miller and Hill peer across the street, trying to see where the gunfire came from. Silence now, except for Reiben screaming.

MILLER
Me and one of mine, you and one of yours?

HILL
Right. Goldman, with me.

MILLER
Caparzo, front and center. Everybody else cover. Go!

They break cover, racing across the street. The others lay down SUPPRESSING FIRE, chewing the building with bullets. All four make it across the street, flattening against the walls, assessing the doorways and windows...

IN THE RUBBLE

Reiben's writhing and screaming, clutching his face. Wade reaches him, tries to pull his hands away, tries to get his helmet off. Upham scrambles over, horrified but ready to help.

REIBEN
...I'm dying, oh shit, I'm dying...

AT THE BUILDING

Miller feints into the doorway, jerks back. Signals the others -- on three. Ready? One, two...

IN THE BUILDING

...<u>three.</u> They duck in, weapons snapping in all directions, targeting the gloom. Nothing but a central hallway leading toward the back of the house, rooms on both sides, a set of stairs leading up. Quiet. They hold their breath.

<u>Listening.</u> It's all about sound...

...the CREAKING of the damaged building...the CRUNCH of their boots on bits of plaster...a FLY BUZZING near the ceiling...

They move forward to check the ground floor, in pairs, covering each other, flinching at shadows:

Hamill and Hastings take the first door, the one on the left, one man high, the other man low. Clear.

Miller and Caparzo go past them to the next door. Miller feints in, jerks back, covers. Caparzo ducks inside, sweeping his M-1 at shadows. Clear.

IN THE RUBBLE

Wade is holding Reiben's head firmly, examining his wound.

WADE
--you're all right--

REIBEN
--bullshit, I'm dying, I got shot in the goddamn <u>head</u>--

WADE
--little tear in the skin, that's all, not even worth a stitch--

(CONTINUED)

REIBEN
--you shitting me? You better not be shitting me--

IN THE BUILDING

The tense cat-and mouse continues. Feinting at doorways, covering, checking rooms. Their movements are staccato, quick silent bursts of motion, stopping, listening...

...a CHANDELIER TINKLES on the breeze...a CURTAIN WHISPERS against a windowsill...a FLOORBOARD CREAKS upstairs...

Their heads jerk up. What was that? Everybody frozen, trying to pinpoint it, trying to process the sound...

...or is it just silence? Nerves working overtime?

Check upstairs. Right. Goldman leads the way, slow as slow can be. A stair CREAKS SOFTLY underfoot. Dammit. Hold still. Wait. Listen. Don't breathe. Okay, keep going. Halfway up...

...and all hell breaks loose in a stunning confusion of motion and GUNFIRE: TWO FIGURES burst from doorways on the upstairs landing, both Germans, one already shot, falling. A THIRD GERMAN from another door, opposite side, SCHMEISSER BLAZING. Goldman hit, the Americans RETURNING FIRE, bullets CHEWING the banisters, raking the walls, taking down the enemy...

...and it's over. A haze of cordite smoke hangs in the air. Goldman is sprawled on the stairs, dead.

HILL
Goddamn it. Goddamn it.

IN THE RUBBLE

The men are tense, ready, weapons aimed at the building. They hear a voice from inside:

MILLER (O.S.)
Coming out!

Miller's group emerges, hustles across the street. Hill gives Hastings a look, tight-lipped and terse:

HILL
We lost Goldman.

Miller and Caparzo are stunned to see Reiben not only alive, but standing on his feet and splashing blood off his face with his canteen.

CAPARZO
Jesus, Reiben. You're not dead.

REIBEN
Don't sound too disappointed.

WADE
(shrugs, to Miller)
It's just a little shrapnel cut.
Lot of capillaries in the scalp.

MILLER
Let's move.

They do. Reiben gives his face one more wipe, looks up to find Upham holding his helmet for him. Reiben takes it -- thanks. Wade gives Reiben's shoulder a squeeze, mutters:

WADE
There's that angel again.

REIBEN
Yeah, right.

EXT - COMMAND POST - NIGHT

The American-held side of town -- several square blocks are occupied by TROOPS of the 101st. SOLDIERS are scurrying half a block away, harassing and pinning down some unseen Germans.

CAPTAIN HAMILL appears b.g., folding back a map. We're "inside" a ruined building, what's left of it. There's plenty of sporadic GUNFIRE here, but it's a relatively safe position.

HAMILL
How was the road in?

MILLER
Scenic. We lost two jeeps and most of our ammo.

HAMILL
Maybe I can make the trip worth it. Lot of chatter came up the pipe before our radio cut out. Word from Command is they got your Private Ryan pin-pointed...
(points on map)
...right there, in Ravenoville. That's about ten kilometers north-northwest of us. That's where you'll find him.

MILLER
Assuming he made it, assuming he's not dead, assuming a lot of things.

Hamill nods. Sarge glances up from the map.

SARGE
You point us the way out of town?

HAMILL
I wouldn't even try it right now.
(to Miller)
Look, last I heard, we got artillery coming up in strength sometime after midnight, few miles east. Gonna be one hell of a show, keep the Germans pretty distracted. You can slip out then, catch a few winks in the meantime.

MILLER
Yeah, okay, appreciate it.

HAMILL
There's a church a block over. Bivouac there, it's fairly secure. Good luck finding Ryan, huh?

Miller nods -- thanks, we'll need it.

CUT TO:

INT - CHURCH - NIGHT

An ANGEL watches over the righteous from a pall of heavenly light -- it's the only STAINED-GLASS WINDOW remaining intact. TILT DOWN to Miller and his men bivouacked in the ruins. A wall has collapsed, leaving a sloping egress of rubble.

Everybody's eating their c-rations...except Caparzo, who's nodding off. Sarge appears, kicks his foot.

SARGE
Caparzo, you're first watch.

CAPARZO
Sarge, I been totin' that thirty all day. What about Upham?

MELLISH
Upham? Not while I'm sleeping...

SARGE
Caparzo!

CAPARZO
Yeah, I'm on it...

He forces himself to his feet, grabs his M-1, goes to a sentry point at the collapsed wall of the church. ANGLE TO Reiben examining his tiny scalp wound in Miller's cracked mirror.

REIBEN
Captain? Can you explain the math of this mission to me?

MILLER
Math?

REIBEN
Yes, sir. Since when does eight equal one? Why they putting our necks on the line for this Ryan?

MELLISH
So the generals can look good for all the newspapers back home. All warm and fuzzy.

WADE
There's more to it than that. Think of the poor guy's mother.

REIBEN
Hey, I got a mother, too. Sarge, you got a mother?

SARGE
Yeah, sweet lady.

REIBEN
Caparzo, Jackson, Corporal Insect there...hell, I bet even the Captain's got a mother...
(beat)
...well, maybe not the Captain, but the rest of us have mothers. Safe to say they'd all be upset if we died, right? So what makes Ryan's mother more important than everybody else's?

CAPARZO
Jesus, Reiben, give it a rest. You're killing me.

REIBEN
Killing <u>you?</u> Hey, pal, I thought I was dead today for real, and for what? Public relations?

JACKSON
Captain? If I may interject? Seems to me this mission is a serious misallocation of valuable military resources.

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
Oh?

JACKSON
Yes, sir. By my way of thinking, I am a finely tuned instrument of warfare. What I mean is, you put me and this sniper rifle anywhere up to and including half a mile from Adolf Hitler, with a clear line of sight, war's over...

MILLER
Reiben? I want you to listen closely to Jackson. <u>This</u> is the way to gripe. Jackson, continue.

JACKSON
...I feel it evident, therefore, that the entire resources of the United States Army should be devoted to one thing and one thing only -- get me and this weapon on a rooftop in Berlin with a week's supply of food and dirty magazines. Now I'm not one to question decisions made on high, but it seems to me that going off to save one itty-bitty private, no matter how grievous the losses to his family, is a waste of my God-given talent.

Mellish and Reiben exchange a look.

MELLISH
That was good.

REIBEN
What about you, sir? What do you think?

MILLER
Reiben, what's the matter with you? There's a chain of command. Griping goes one way -- up, never down. I don't gripe to you, I don't gripe in front of you. How long you been in the army?

REIBEN
Sorry, sir, you're right...
(beat)
...but for the sake of argument. Say I was a major.

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
In that case, I would say this is an excellent mission, with an extremely valuable objective, and worthy of my best efforts...
(beat)
...in addition, as I have pointed out, I have a fondness for cheese, and I hope to sample some of the local products to see if they live up to their excellent reputation. Moreover, I feel heartfelt sorrow for the mother of Private James Ryan and will be more than willing to lay down my life and the lives of my men, especially you, Reiben, to help relieve her suffering.

The men thoroughly enjoy the performance.

SARGE
Sir, if you were not a captain, I would compliment you on being an excellent liar.

MILLER
If I were not a captain, I would thank you for the compliment and tell you my ability to lie comes from being a top-notch poker player, having learned at the side of my mother -- yes, Reiben, I have a mother -- who is, by popular acclaim, the best poker player in...

They men lean forward expectantly.

MILLER
...my home town.

SOFT SNORING draws their attention. They turn and see Upham crashed out, head back and mouth thrown open to the ceiling.

MELLISH
He looks like a baby bird waiting for a worm.

MILLER
I suggest we all do the same.

The men don't have to be told twice -- they settle down to sleep. Miller pulls his map case and flashlight. Alone, in the dim glow, he studies the route to Ravenoville...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT - CHURCH - NIGHT

Sarge awakens, checks the time. He's past due for his shift. Concerned and cautious, he grabs his M-1 and rises, picks his way carefully through the rubble to the collapsed wall --

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

-- and emerges to find Miller gazing off, having a smoke.

SARGE
You're into my shift.

MILLER
I couldn't sleep anyway.

Sarge hunkers down. They share the cigarette back and forth, cupping it to guard against snipers, speaking in low tones:

MILLER
I was thinking about the guys in this town. They're not gonna hold out until relief shows up. Germans are gonna clobber 'em.

SARGE
Seems that way.

MILLER
(beat, softly)
So what makes <u>them</u> expendable? You tell me that?

Sarge has no answer. Their attention goes to a FIGURE scurrying toward them from the next position over, hugging the shadows -- it's a PARATROOPER with the 101st:

PARATROOPER
Sir? I bum a smoke?

Miller hands him the rest of the pack.

MILLER
Keep the pack, Airborne.

PARATROOPER
That's swell, sir, thanks. I'll share 'em around.

He cups his hands, lights his cigarette off Miller's.

PARATROOPER
Fellas all want you to know how grateful we are, sir.

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
(beat, puzzled)
For what?

PARATROOPER
For going after one of ours. Means a lot to us, sir, really does.

Off he goes, scurrying back the way he came. Miller and Sarge look at each, don't even know what to say. Suddenly:

The horizon lights up. A DEEP RUMBLE rolls across the hills like a thousand bass drums, deeper than any thunder.

Miller and Sarge rise, gazing at the MASSIVE ARTILLERY BATTLE taking place just a few miles off. Once again, Miller's hand starts shaking. This time Sarge doesn't pretend to ignore it. He gives Miller a look -- how long has that been going on?

MILLER
Comes and goes. I'll be fine.

Sarge doesn't like it, he's about to press the point -- but Reiben and the others appear from inside the church, drawn by the artillery battle. One hell of a wake-up call.

SARGE
Gear up. We're moving out.

The men stay transfixed for few moments longer. Upham stares, the lightning-like flashes reflecting in his glasses. Softly:

UPHAM
I'm not cut out for this.

REIBEN
Don't worry, Upham. God'll protect you.

UPHAM
Says who?

REIBEN
Eisenhower.

They head back inside to gear up.

CUT TO:

EXT - STE.-MARIE-DU-MONT - NIGHT

Miller and his men approach the outskirts of town where SEVERAL DOZEN AIRBORNE TROOPS are waiting to see them off. The troops close in from both sides, murmuring encouragement, patting shoulders, shaking hands. A GENTLE-FACED PRIVATE holds two bulky cartridge belts of B.A.R. ammo out to Reiben.

PRIVATE
Here.

Reiben's about to make some smartass comment, but the soldier's vulnerable expression stops him.

PRIVATE
I had a brother died on Guadalcanal. Go on, take 'em.

Reiben looks to Miller, not sure what to say.

MILLER
Figure you guys need those just as much as us.

PRIVATE
(considers it)
Take one of 'em, at least.

REIBEN
(softly)
Okay. Thanks.

Miller and his men move on. The Airborne guys are handing over ammo as they pass, whatever they can spare. One guy hands Caparzo an ammo belt for the machine gun:

SOLDIER #2
Hey, infantry, here's a belt for that thirty...

SOLDIER #3
...here's another one...

Caparzo accepts both belts, nods. Somebody takes Upham by the wrist, carefully pours three M-1 bullets into his hand. It's all he's got. Upham hardly knows what to say, except:

UPHAM
Thanks.

Miller and his group walk out of town, leaving the doomed paratroopers of Ste.-Marie-du-Mont behind...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - CART PATH - NIGHT

A few miles further on. The artillery battle plays across the clouds like distant thunder and lightning.

Jackson is walking point. The others are spread out at intervals behind him, watchful and alert. You never know what's behind that tree, or waiting in those shadows...

Jackson stops. Everybody freezes. Listening. Waiting.

Jackson looks back, signals Miller -- somebody's coming.

Miller turns, motions "everybody off the path." The men pour off the road like oiled shadows, becoming one with the bushes and trees...

...and moments later, a PAIR OF GERMAN INFANTRYMEN come trudging into view.

The GIs tense up. Reiben eases the safety off his B.A.R., puts finger to trigger, looks to Miller -- do we open fire? Miller gives him a shake of the head and motions "let them go." The two infantrymen pass from sight. Pause...

...and now an entire GERMAN PLATOON comes trudging around the bend. Dozens of Wehrmacht soldiers, heavily armed.

Reiben's eyes widen. He eases his finger away from the trigger, throws Miller a look -- holy shit, sir.

The platoon passes, their boots no more than two feet from the faces of the hidden Americans. Upham is wide-eyed with fear.

The platoon fades from view. Miller motions for everybody to stay put. Everybody does...except Upham. He stands up, not paying attention, breathing a sigh of relief...

...and a WHIP-TAIL SQUAD appears. FOUR MEN with Schmeissers trail the main platoon by thirty yards, covering their rear. Upham stands frozen, exposed, barely concealed in the shadows.

Miller's furious. Everybody braces their weapons, preparing to open fire. The whip-tail squad draws closer...

...and passes by without noticing Upham. He could reach out and touch their shoulders, that's how close they come.

The whip-tail squad vanishes up the road. Everybody holds for long moments, remembering to breathe. Upham is weak-kneed, amazed he's still alive. He turns, ready to apologize --

-- and somebody grabs him by the throat, slams him flat to the ground. It's Mellish, teeth bared, holding the tip of his combat knife to Upham's throat:

MELLISH
(whispering, furious)
You pull something that stupid again, I'll kill you myself!

SARGE
(harsh whisper)
Awright, enough!

(CONTINUED)

Sarge pulls Mellish off, shoves him on his way. Upham rises, shaky with fear and guilt. The men are giving him shitty glares as they move out. Miller nails him with a look -- you coming? Upham picks up his rifle and hurries after them...

CUT TO:

EXT - CROSSROADS - NIGHT

A moonlit road sign reads: "Ravenoville 6km." ANGLE SHIFTS to Sarge and Caparzo checking it out, scurrying along a low stone wall to Miller and the others. Miller's checking a compass.

SARGE
Sign says six kilometers.

Miller nods, notes the first hint of dawn on the horizon. He indicates a wooded ridge ahead.

MILLER
Sun's up in half an hour. Let's make that ridge, I don't want to be caught in the open.

They rise, pressing on...

CUT TO:

EXT - WOODED RIDGE - DAWN

The light of dawn filters through the leaves. The SOUND OF DISTANT GUNS has been replaced by the CHIRPING OF BIRDS.

BOOM DOWN to a small clearing, where the men are having a breakfast of k-ration crackers and water. They're bone-weary, glad to have made it through the night. Upham's dispensing the food, pouring water from a canteen.

Nobody's looking at him. It's like he doesn't exist. The silence speaks volumes.

Upham comes back to Wade, who's divvying the portions. He's the only one who seems to be acknowledging Upham's existence this morning. Upham hunkers down, still drained and pale from last night. Softly:

UPHAM
I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

WADE
You just gotta think, okay? Don't do anything unless you're told. Keep your eyes on the Captain, always. Or Sarge. Or the rest of us. Right?

(CONTINUED)

Upham nods -- right, okay. Wade finishes counting out a final ration of crackers. He starts to rise, but Upham stops him.

UPHAM
I'll take 'em.

Wade sees the look on Upham's face -- please let me. Wade hands the crackers over. Upham heads up the rise toward:

A BREAK IN THE TREES

where Miller stands alone over a spectacular view of the farm country, gazing at the dawn. Upham appears, hands him his crackers. Miller nods, takes a bite. An awkward beat.

UPHAM
Sir? I wanted to apologize...

MILLER
(cuts him off)
You didn't know. From now on you will.

Upham nods, follows his gaze toward the dawn.

UPHAM
Beautiful. Looks like a Renoir.

MILLER
I was thinking Monet.

UPHAM
You know art, sir?

MILLER
(shrugs)
I know what I like.

UPHAM
Where you from, sir?

Miller pauses, smiles.

MILLER
What's the pool up to now?

UPHAM
(smiles, caught)
Three hundred bucks.

MILLER
Tell you what, Corporal. Let's let it get up to five hundred, I'll tell you all about myself, we'll split the money.

UPHAM
That's pretty sneaky, sir.

MILLER
Why do you think they made me an officer?

They fall silent, enjoying the dawn together.

CUT TO:

EXT - HILLY COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Sarge is walking point. The men trudge along, suffering the heat and flies. Reiben shifts his B.A.R. from one arm to another, sweat dripping down his face.

REIBEN
You know what? I hope we do find Ryan. And I hope he's still alive.

MELLISH
Yeah? Why's that?

REIBEN
'Cause I'm gonna make the son of a bitch carry my B.A.R. all the way back to the beach for me.

CAPARZO
Let's toss in my thirty, make him carry both. See if the prick lives.

WADE
Now, now, don't be mean.

REIBEN
Easy for you, Mr. "All-I-Ever-Carry-Is-Bandages." Any idea what a B.A.R. weighs? Nineteen and a half pounds, not counting ammo. You try schlepping nineteen and half pounds on your shoulder all goddamn day, see how you like it.

JACKSON
Reiben? Anyone ever tell you you're unpleasant to be around sometimes?

REIBEN
Unpleasant? This ain't unpleasant. Wait'll I get my hands on Ryan, <u>then</u> you'll see unpleasant...

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
Why can't you children be more like Upham? Look, he's carrying all the ammo, plus the radio -- you don't see him complaining, do you?

Upham shoots a "who are you kidding" look at Miller -- and decides he's too hot and tired to care anymore:

UPHAM
Actually, sir, I was just thinking...

Everybody rolls their eyes, expecting the worst.

UPHAM
...that I am so tired of this goddamn walking, I'd pay a thousand dollars to see Ryan crawl through a river of camel shit just to hear my great-aunt Martha fart "Yankee Doodle" through a field phone.

The men are shocked and impressed into momentary silence, then comes the verdict:

CAPARZO
Jesus Christ, he's a natural.

MELLISH
Good. That was good.

Up ahead, Sarge suddenly motions "down." Everybody crouches. Sarge proceeds cautiously forward and drops to his stomach at an overlook, checking out whatever's below.

He waves them forward. They scurry up to join him, dropping to his side...and WE BOOM OVER THEM to reveal the scene below:

It's a glider graveyard. The field down there is littered with wreckage. The group rises, heads down the slope, enters:

THE GLIDER GRAVEYARD

Eerie and desolate. A restless breeze stirs the grass, flapping bits of fabric. The carcasses of a dozen wooden Horsa gliders lie shattered and cocked at strange angles. Debris is strewn everywhere. A wing here. A door there.

Protruding from the ground all over the field is the cause of this carnage: telephone poles driven vertically into the ground with the sole intention of tearing gliders to pieces upon landing. It's called "Rommel's asparagus."

They pass a glider with the BODY OF THE PILOT still pinned in the cockpit. Flies are BUZZING in the heat.

(CONTINUED)

They come into view of the SURVIVORS -- not many, perhaps a DOZEN WOUNDED. They're lying in and around a wrecked glider, awaiting rescue.

LIEUTENANT SOTET hobbles out to greet Miller, leaning on a makeshift crutch, one leg heavily splinted. He's drawn and haggard -- a glider pilot. Softly:

MILLER
What the hell happened?

SOTET
Germans drove telephone poles into these fields...y'know, tear us to pieces in case we tried to come in by glider.

It obviously worked. Miller's men hardly know what to say.

SOTET
We had a couple of guys who could still walk. They took off days ago, try and get us some help. I don't know if they ever got through.

MILLER
(to Caparzo)
Get on the radio, see if you can call this position in.
(turns back)
You Airborne?

SOTET
Me? No, I'm a pilot, four-fortieth troop carriers...
(indicates wounded)
...these guys we were bringing in, they're Airborne. And those over there...

They see it for the first time: bodies are laid out on the grass in several huge lines. There must be over a hundred dead. They've been covered up as much as possible given the circumstances -- tarps, raincoats, torn glider fabric.

SOTET
Did what we could for 'em. A few are still trapped in the gliders, but they'll have to wait for graves registration to catch up with us.
(softly)
Telephone poles, you believe that?

SARGE
These guys 101st? Bound for where?

(CONTINUED)

SOTET
Ravenoville.

Miller and Sarge are trading looks -- is it possible?

MILLER
Wade, check the wounded, see if he's there. Lieutenant, did you collect the dogtags?

SOTET
In my glider...that one over there. Small equipment bag near the door. What's this about?

MILLER
We're looking for a trooper named Ryan. You mind?

Sotet nods, go ahead. Miller strides off with Sarge and the others at his heels, calling to Caparzo:

MILLER
Caparzo! Any luck on that radio?

CAPARZO
It's for shit, sir! Nothing!

MILLER
Try again later!

INSIDE A WRECKED GLIDER

Still somewhat intact. The group enters, led by Miller. He finds the equipment bag, opens it, passes it around...

MILLER
Everybody grab a handful, we're checking tags. Ryan could be here. C'mon, empty the bag...

Everybody takes big double-handfuls, dumping the tags into their helmets and laps. They start checking, tossing tags back into the bag as they go...

REIBEN
Think he's here?

CAPARZO
Bet he is. Bet the son of a bitch is.

...and something strange takes over, something like a touch of gambling fever. The men start going faster and faster as if it were a game or competition, first one to find him wins:

CAPARZO
...bet I find him first...

REIBEN
...screw you, he's mine...

MELLISH
...c'mon, I know you're in here...

JACKSON
...no use hiding, Ryan, we're on to you, buddy...

CAPARZO
...come out, come out, wherever you are...

REIBEN
...olly olly oxen free, you Irish prick...

This gets a big laugh, the search growing even giddier as:

CAPARZO
...ten bucks I nail him first...

REIBEN
...you're on, you mook...

MELLISH
(holds up tag)
I got him! Ryan! I got him!

MILLER
James Francis?

MELLISH
(reading closely)
John Gordon...shit.

He tosses it in the bag, disgusted. The search continues, but Miller notices the look on Upham's face -- an uncertain look that says "what are we doing?" Sarge sees it, too -- he looks from Upham to Miller, suddenly wondering as well. The other guys are catching their expressions, falling silent...

Wade appears at the doorway, his expression simmering just below furious, his voice very low and steady:

WADE
You wanna keep it down? Those guys out there can hear you laughing.
(indicates the dogtags)
This isn't bingo night, for Chrissakes. Those men are dead.

The men stare at the tags. Wade's got a way of cutting through the shit. They continue checking the names, silent now...

EXT - FIELD LEADING FROM GLIDER GRAVEYARD - DAY

Miller and the men are walking out across the fields, leaving the glider graveyard behind. We hear softly:

CAPARZO
We'll find him in Ravenoville. I bet that's where he is...

REIBEN
Yeah? How much we betting...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - ROAD GOING PAST RAVENOVILLE - DAY

FRENCH REFUGEES are streaming by, a river of humanity -- old people, women, children. They're carrying their worldly possession on their backs or in carts. AMERICAN WOUNDED are being brought this way as well -- some walking, some being carried on jeeps or trucks...

FRESH AMERICAN TROOPS walk the road in the opposite direction, heading up toward the fighting. Occasional SUPPLY TRUCKS go past, bouncing and swaying over the ruts...

In close proximity to all this activity is:

THE RAILROAD SWITCHING YARD

PARATROOPERS OF THE 101st hold the railhead with an impressive defensive perimeter. And coming across the tracks is:

PRIVATE RYAN, a young paratrooper. He's perplexed at having been summoned, and is getting nervous -- he notices his fellow troopers staring at him. They know something he doesn't.

Miller's men watch Ryan approach:

MELLISH
So that's what he looks like.

Ryan steps up, salutes MAJOR HAWES:

RYAN
Sir, Private James Ryan reporting as ordered.

HAWES
At ease, Private. Captain Miller here has something to tell you.

RYAN
(faces Miller)
Sir?

MILLER
I'm afraid I have bad news.
(hesitates)
There's no easy way to say this, so I'll just say it. Fact is, all your brothers have died.

Color drains from Ryan's face -- he's shocked beyond words. He sits down on a steel switching box, finds his voice:

RYAN
Dead? They're dead?

MILLER
(nods)
We've been sent to get you. You're going home.

RYAN
Oh my God...my brothers...my God...

He's holding back tears. Major Hawes squeezes his shoulder.

HAWES
We're sorry for you, James. Can't tell you how much.

RYAN
How did they die?

MILLER
They were killed in action.

RYAN
In action? That can't be...

MILLER
I know it's crazy, but these things do happen.

RYAN
No, I mean it <u>can't</u> be. They're both still in grammar school.

Miller gets a sinking feeling -- something's wrong here.

MILLER
James Francis Ryan? Ohio?

RYAN
James Frederick Ryan. Minnesota.

A stunned pause. There aren't even words for this. Finally:

RYAN
This mean my brothers are okay?

MILLER
I'm quite certain they are.
(turns, salutes Hawes)
Major. Sorry to have troubled you.

Hawes returns the salute, trying to keep a straight face.

HAWES
Captain, no trouble at all.
Anything else?

MILLER
We came across some of your wounded
a mile south of here. I'm sure
they'd appreciate your help.

HAWES
I'll see to it. Thank you.

MILLER
Thank <u>you,</u> sir.

Miller turns, walks back to his men. They're hearing snickers spreading along the perimeter -- the paratroopers are having a laugh at their expense.

MILLER
Caparzo, try to raise Command. I'd
like to have a word with them.

Caparzo grabs the radio and starts trying to raise somebody.

MELLISH
God's laughing at us. He's looking
down and laughing at us...

JACKSON
...laughing, hell, he's holding his
ankles and howling...

REIBEN
...son of a bitch Ryan...gonna kill
him, that's all, just kill his ass...

SARGE
Sir? You all right?

MILLER
(tight)
Fine.

(CONTINUED)

SARGE
(beat)
What now?

Miller nails him with a look -- drop dead for asking.

MILLER
Caparzo?

CAPARZO
Nothing, sir. Goddamn radios.

MILLER
Shit!

Miller walks off toward the road. The others sigh, grab their gear, go after him...

MILLER

walks against the flow of refugees, his men trailing behind.

MILLER
(muttering)
...goddamn radios don't work...chain of command doesn't work...nothing in this goddamn war works...

The men trade looks. Is he griping? Is that what that is?

MILLER
Here's an idea. Let's split up into two groups and wander the countryside calling his name. Sooner or later, he's bound to hear us.

SARGE
Good thought, sir, but could take a while.

MILLER
Let's ask the refugees, maybe they've seen him.
(stops an OLD COUPLE)
Parlez vous Ryan? Oui? Non?

The old couple mutter to each other, decide Miller's crazy, move on. Miller and his men keep walking.

Coming up the road with the refugees is a LONG RAGGED COLUMN OF GERMAN PRISONERS escorted by AIRBORNE TROOPS. The paratroopers have seen some heavy action; many are walking wounded. Miller calls to the nearest group of them:

MILLER
Hey! 101st! You know a guy named Ryan?

The men shake their heads, pass by. Miller keeps going, tries the next group:

MILLER
Ryan? Anybody know Ryan?

The men pause. One of them looks at his buddy -- is that name familiar? He turns, hollers at a group further back:

PARATROOPER #1
Hey, Joe! Doesn't Michaelson pal around with a Ryan in B company?

JOE
(hollers back)
Yeah! I think so!

PARATROOPER #1
Get him up here, would you?

JOE nudges the man next to him -- MICHAELSON, who seems oblivious to the conversation so far. Joe motions "come on, up ahead, they want us." Miller and his men still don't get it, not until the pair arrive and the conversation begins:

MILLER
You know a guy named Ryan?

JOE
You'll have to speak up, sir, his hearing's not so good...

MICHAELSON
YOU'LL HAVE TO SPEAK UP, SIR, MY HEARING'S NOT SO GOOD!

JOE
...comes and goes. German grenade went off right next to his head...

MICHAELSON
IT COMES AND GOES! GERMAN GRENADE WENT OFF RIGHT NEXT TO MY--

MILLER
YEAH, YEAH, I GET IT! THESE GUYS SAY YOU KNOW RYAN?

MICHAELSON
WHO?

MILLER
RYAN! YOU KNOW RYAN?

MICHAELSON
JIMMY RYAN?

Miller's men are electrified -- this could be it.

MILLER
(nodding his head)
JAMES FRANCIS RYAN?

MICHAELSON
(nodding, then shaking)
NO! JAMES FRANCIS RYAN!

MILLER
THAT'S WHAT I SAID!

MICHAELSON
WHAT?

MELLISH
This is wracking my nerves.

MILLER
Anybody got a pencil?

Everybody starts patting pockets.

MILLER
C'mon, a pencil! Anybody?

UPHAM (O.S.)
Yes, sir...

Miller turns, sees Upham holding a pencil stub with a deadpan (though unmistakably self-satisfied) look on his face.

UPHAM
...a small one.

MILLER
(beat)
Write this down: "James Francis Ryan? Ohio? You know him?"

Upham jots the message, shows it to Michaelson.

MICHAELSON
COURSE I KNOW HIM! HE'S MY BEST BUDDY!

MILLER
Does he know where he is?

(CONTINUED)

Upham jots and shows the message. Michaelson shakes his head.

MICHAELSON
WHO KNOWS WHERE ANYBODY IS? WE GOT SCATTERED ALL OVER THE DAMN MAP COMING IN...
(everybody deflates)
...BUT I CAN TELL YOU WHERE HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE!

MILLER
REALLY? WHERE?

MICHAELSON
WHAT?

MILLER
Upham...

Upham jots, holds the note up. Michaelson nods -- oh.

MICHAELSON
RAMELLE! HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE IN RAMELLE! B COMPANY WAS GOING AFTER SOME BRIDGE! DOES THAT HELP?

Miller's group is electrified again -- real news at last.

MILLER
(to Joe)
Look, I can't yell anymore. Will you tell him thanks when his hearing comes back?

JOE
No problem, sir.

The paratroopers move on. Sarge already has the map out:

SARGE
Ramelle. Twenty kilometers southwest.

Beat. Miller looks at the men. What are we waiting for? They heft their gear and keep walking as refugees stream past...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - HEDGEROW COUNTRY - DAY

Miller and his men are trudging down a hedgerow lane untouched by war...when a VOICE suddenly comes out of nowhere:

GIRL (O.S.)
Pssst! Vous êtes americains!

(CONTINUED)

They drop into a crouch, weapons snapping up...

GIRL (O.S.)
Ne tirez pas! je suis votre amie!

UPHAM
She says don't shoot!

...and a 13 year-old FRENCH FARM GIRL emerges from the brush.

GIRL
Il y en a un de vous qui parle français?

UPHAM
Oui, Moi.

GIRL
Merci mon dieu! Bon, maintenant il faut que vouz veniez tous avec moi, tous!

MILLER
What's she saying?

UPHAM
She wants us to come with her.

GIRL
Il y a des soldats blessés a la ferme! ils sont américains comme vous! ils sont tombés du ciel!

UPHAM
...says there are wounded Americans at her farm. Paratroopers, I think.

GIRL
Ils m'ont donné ça pour vous!

She pulls a note, thrusts it at them. Miller takes it, scans:

MILLER
"...we're wounded Americans...need help...please come..."

SARGE
Krauts could've written that. They've got translators, too.

MILLER
It's legit.

SARGE
How do you know?

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
They signed it: "Mr. Thunder and Mr. Flash."

Miller nods to the girl -- lead the way.

EXT - WOODED AREA - DAY

We're traveling beneath a canopy of trees. TILT DOWN to reveal the girl leading Miller and his men through the woods:

GIRL
Mon grand-père a trouvé un de vos soldats dans un arbre avec une jambe cassée...

UPHAM
Her grandfather found one of our guys hung up in a tree with a busted leg...

GIRL
(pointing at her side)
...l'autre a une balle dans le côté...juste là...et c'est méchamment infecté...

UPHAM
The other man's got a bullet wound. It's badly infected...

GIRL
On les a cachés a la ferme, mais on peut pas les garder pour toujours! il y a des allemands partout ici...

UPHAM
They've been hiding our guys in their barn, but they're worried about the Germans showing up...

SARGE
How close are we?

UPHAM
C'est encore loin?

GIRL
Non non, c'est juste là...

She points -- and stops, her voice trailing off. They follow her gaze. Dark smoke is rising beyond the trees.

GIRL
Oh! mon Dieu...

(CONTINUED)

She takes off running with her heart in her throat. Miller tries to grab her, but too late...

MILLER
Wait! Shit!

EXT - FARM - DAY

The girl comes running out of the woods. Miller and his men come darting along the treeline, weapons ready, trying to cover the girl as she runs...

The farmhouse is burning. Worse yet, there are bodies sprawled in the mud -- her entire FAMILY has been shot, including her little brother. The only survivor is an OLD MAN kneeling over the bodies, weeping his heart out -- the grandfather.

GIRL
Grand-père!

She runs across the yard, throws herself into his arms. They cling tightly together, sobbing.

OLD MAN
Les allemands sont venus. Il ne reste plus que nous maintenant. Juste nous deux...

Miller and the men approach. Upham doesn't have to translate, they know what's being said. They look around, faces grim and strained. Even the FARM ANIMALS have been shot...

...and sprawled in the sty among the dead pigs are the TWO PARATROOPERS still clutching their weapons, spent shell casings all around. They went down fighting.

Miller steps in, crouches, checks their dogtags just to make sure. No Ryan. The men just stare down. Softly:

REIBEN
God damn Krauts. God damn 'em all to hell.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - FARM - DUSK

The sun is setting over the fields. Miller and his men are sitting at the treeline, tired and filthy from digging. Caparzo enters frame, drops his shovel, grabs a canteen. Nobody's saying anything. Just gazing off.

The girl and her grandfather stand together at the fresh gravesite some distance away. Figures in a landscape.

REIBEN
Never was a German worth a damn. They're all pricks.

Pause. Nobody seems to feel much like arguing, but they're all thinking about it.

MILLER
What about Beethoven? You said Beethoven was the greatest composer ever lived.

REIBEN
He was, sir. Doesn't mean he wasn't a prick, though, does it? He was German, so it stands to reason.

UPHAM
They can't all be pricks.

REIBEN
You saw what they did. Even shot a kid. How old was he, ten?
(beat)
No such thing as a decent German. Try and name one. Go ahead, you can't. There aren't any.

Pause. Softly:

WADE
Albert Schweitzer.

REIBEN
What?

WADE
I said, Albert Schweitzer.

REIBEN
What makes him glow?

WADE
He decides one day he's not doing enough for mankind, so he gets himself a medical degree, goes off to Africa to spend the rest of his life treating the natives. No reason other than they need it and he wants to help. Guy's been there thirty years now.
(off their looks)
It's because of him I'm gonna be a doctor. He's German.

REIBEN
Leave it to you to find the exception.

Wade nods his head out toward the gravesite.

WADE
You want me to explain that? I can't. You asked me to name a decent German, so I did.

Wade stands, grabs his gear, heads off. The others rise, staring after him, proceed to gear up:

REIBEN
Guy could find something nice to say about anybody. Ask him about Hitler, he'll say: "anybody who likes dogs can't be all bad."

MILLER
Reiben? Lose an argument for once.

REIBEN
Yes, sir.

DISSOLVE TO:

A PAIR OF GI BOOTS enters frame, crunching slowly across open ground. ANGLE UP to Mellish walking point...

EXT - FIELD/RADAR COMPLEX - DAY

...as the men traverse a barren, desolate place. Looming in the sky ahead is a RADAR TOWER. This area got nailed by a serious Allied bombing -- it's pitted with craters and strewn with shattered German anti-aircraft artillery. The GIs are spread out to avoid bunching, walking abreast:

REIBEN
You know what the best thing that could happen is?

JACKSON
You step on a rusty nail, get lockjaw, and never say another word again as long as you live?

REIBEN
That's not it. The best thing that could happen is, we find Ryan and he's dead.

MILLER
Why's that?

(CONTINUED)

REIBEN
Sir, consider the possibilities. A: Ryan is alive. We have to take him back to the beach. Knowing you, you don't let him carry my gear, even though he should, and we all get killed trying to keep him alive.

MILLER
Except for the last part part, that one's not bad.

REIBEN
B: Ryan is dead. Blown up, let's say. The biggest piece is the size of a pea, so there's nothing left to find. We wander around until the Germans pick us off one by one.

SARGE
I don't like that one at all.

REIBEN
Neither do I, Sarge, but there's a worse one. C: We find Ryan wounded. Not only does he not carry my gear, we have to carry his gear. And him.

MILLER
That's a possibility.

REIBEN
That's why I'm saying, sir, best thing is we find him dead, more or less intact. We grab a dogtag and high-tail it back to the beach -- or better yet, we deploy straight to Caen and check out the lingerie.

WADE
What about Ryan's mother?

REIBEN
Let her get her own lingerie. Hey, it ever occur to you she might not even like the guy? Maybe it was the other three she loved. Maybe she always wanted to send little Jimmy back for a refund...

...and all hell breaks loose as MACHINE GUN BULLETS rip the air. The men dive, flatten, roll for cover...then silence.

MILLER
Where'd it come from? Anybody?

(CONTINUED)

Nobody. Sarge hollers up to Mellish, who's hugging dirt about 20 yards ahead of everybody else. He's on featureless, open ground -- the most exposed of them all. He's shaking.

SARGE
Mellish! You see anything?

Mellish raises up ever so slightly to look -- and MACHINE GUN FIRE drives him back down again.

THE MACHINE GUN NEST

contains THREE GERMANS. We don't see faces. One man's on the gun, a second feeds the belt, a third brings up more ammo...

THE AMERICANS

spot the MUZZLE FLASHES -- it's hidden in the rubble near the radar tower, maybe sixty yards up. Dialogue comes fast:

MILLER
Sarge! You see any way we can back out of here gracefully?

SARGE
Not in one piece, sir! They got us pinned pretty good!

Miller mind races. No options, except:

MILLER
Awright, we have to take the bastards! You know the drill, we draw fire and work up! Sergeant!

SARGE
Who's widest left?

REIBEN
(shrugging off his pack)
Me, goddamn it, shit...

SARGE
Who's up the middle?

CAPARZO
Adrian Caparzo, that's me...

SARGE
Who's widest right?

MILLER
I am!

(CONTINUED)

SARGE
Sir, I suggest you sit this one out--

They duck as another PROLONGED BURST OF MACHINE GUN FIRE rakes the area, then stops. Miller glances up sharply.

MILLER
Goddamn it, Sergeant, call it!

SARGE
Suppressing fire! Reiben, go!

The GIs OPEN FIRE at the machine gun nest as Reiben lunges out of his shell crater and takes off running. The Germans OPEN FIRE. Reiben races the bullets, dives for cover, makes it --

SARGE
Miller! Go!

-- and then it's Miller who's up and running, drawing the machine gun in his direction. He dives, rolls, makes cover --

SARGE
Caparzo!

-- and then it's Caparzo, drawing gunfire, diving --

SARGE
Reiben!

-- and Reiben again, barely making it to safety --

SARGE
Miller!

-- and so on, the runners leap-frogging and gaining yards, working their way closer and closer until:

A bullet slaps Caparzo in the thigh. He goes down.

CAPARZO
AAHHH, SHIT!

Reiben's up and running, drawing fire away from Caparzo...

And then Miller, drawing fire away from Reiben...

Now Reiben again, getting closer, just about grenade-throwing range...

Now Miller, closing in from the other side, pulling a grenade, angling for a throw...

And then Wade breaks cover, trying to get to Caparzo.

The machine gun swings, OPENS FIRE. Wade stumbles, sits down, presses his stomach as if punched. He looks almost embarrassed. A long exhale of breath...

WADE
....oh...stupid...

UPHAM
WADE!

Miller and Reiben pop their pins and throw. The grenades arc into the nest, clattering off concrete. BOOM! Nothing now but silence and billowing dust. All eyes go to Wade...

SARGE
Wade? You hit?

No answer. Everybody starts toward Wade from all directions. Miller and Reiben come running, faster and faster...

Upham's the first one there. Caparzo's not far behind, limping on his grazed leg, then the others. Miller and Reiben arrive last, stunned to see:

Wade took five bullets in the stomach. He looks astonished by the pain, can barely breath. A stunned, frozen beat --

MILLER
Oh, Wade, oh, Jesus Christ...

-- and they throw themselves to the ground, hands grabbing and ripping through the medical pack in a flurry, tearing Wade's shirt open, everybody shouting and hollering at once:

JACKSON
--oh, Christ, it's bad--

MILLER
--sulfa, gimme the sulfa--

SARGE
--shit, he's bleeding, get pressure on it--

MELLISH
--help me out, Upham, shit, use your hands--

CAPARZO
--me, goddamn it, he was comin' after me--

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
--more sulfa, I need more sulfa--

JACKSON
--oh, God, Jesus--

CAPARZO
--don't die, Wade, don't you do it--

SARGE
--morphine, he needs morphine--

MELLISH
--bleeding all over the goddamn place, press harder--

CAPARZO
--don't you die, you son of a bitch, stay with us--

They're injecting morphine, pouring sulfa, getting bloody. It's all a blur, a rush of adrenalin and panicked effort. But it's happening anyway, Wade's dying and there's nothing they can do about it...

MILLER
Wade? Wade? Can you hear me?

Wade is looking up at them, shaking, riding the pain, hardly making a sound. Is there blame in his eyes? Forgiveness? Does he even know what's happening?

Yes, he knows. Drifting now with the morphine. The shaking subsides. Eyes glazing. Going away...

...away.

The aftermath of silence seems to last forever. Nobody knowing what to say. Nobody wanting to be the first to speak.

A soft sob. Upham's crying.

VOICE (O.S.)
Kamerad!

They whip their heads around, amazed to see a GERMAN SOLDIER staggering toward them from the direction of the machine gun nest, arms raised and head bleeding...

GERMAN
Kamerad! Ich ergebe mich! Nicht schiessen!

Reiben's amazement gives way to rage. He grabs an M-1, lunges to his feet, and OPENS FIRE before anybody can react --

(CONTINUED)

REIBEN
YOU SON OF A BITCH!

MILLER
Reiben!

-- and the German drops for cover as carbine rounds rip the dirt all around him. Miller slams into Reiben from behind, spins him around, tries to wrestle the weapon away...

MILLER
Hold your fire!

REIBEN
I'm gonna kill that kraut-eating son of a bitch!

...and the brief tug-of-war ends with Miller ramming the rifle into Reiben's gut and knocking him on his ass. Miller stands over him, catching his breath...

MILLER
We don't shoot prisoners!

...and the German rises again on shaky legs, arms upraised...

GERMAN
Nicht schiessen! Ich will mich ergeben!

...but Reiben's still gripped by rage -- he lunges to his feet and goes after the German. The German turns, tries to run...

MILLER
Reiben, goddamn it!

...and Reiben takes the man down with a flying tackle. He rolls him over and starts beating the shit out of him, fists flying, punching him in the face...

The others arrive, drag Reiben off. Sarge gets him in a headlock, like a cowboy wrestling a steer.

SARGE
REIBEN, ARE YOU GONNA CALM DOWN OR AM I GONNA STOMP YOUR GUTS? YOU HEAR ME? NOW EASE OFF!

Reiben eases off, forces himself calm. Sarge lets him go. The German looks up at Miller, battered and bloody, voice small:

GERMAN
...bitte...tötet mich nicht...Ich will mich ergeben...

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
Check him for weapons.

Mellish and Caparzo pat the German down. Mellish finds a Wehrmacht dagger, holds it up.

MELLISH
What's this for? Fricassee a few GIs, you piece of shit?

They drag the terrified German to his feet. He keeps his hands in the air. Reiben's glowering, barely restraining himself.

REIBEN
Ask him one thing for me. I wanna know if it was his finger on the trigger that took down Wade.

SARGE
It doesn't matter. Wade's dead just the same.

UPHAM
We're not just gonna leave him there like that...are we, sir?

The men all look to Miller.

MILLER
Organize a burial detail. Put the German to work, too. Jackson, you and I stand watch -- you're south perimeter, I'm north.

Miller speaks with authority, but something's missing. There's a dead spot in his eyes. It's subtle, only Sarge really notices. He watches Miller turn and walk away.

SARGE
You heard the man. Move your asses.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - BASE OF THE RADAR TOWER - DAY

Dark clouds gathering. We find Miller sitting on a broken concrete slab, staring off at the horizon, a cigarette burned down nearly to his lips. His concentration seems intense...

...and we realize he's desperately trying to control the shaking in his hand. It's clenched tight.

Sarge appears, coming up from behind. Miller realizes he's not alone. Sarge sits, waits. (The burial detail is at work b.g.) Nothing is said for a time, and then:

MILLER
What was that kid's name in North Africa? The goofy one who did the handstands...

SARGE
Vecchio.

MILLER
Vecchio. Right. Vecchio.
(softly)
What a goofy kid.

Sarge nods. A stretch of silence. Miller looks at him.

MILLER
Know what makes a good officer? First thing they teach you?

SARGE
What's that?

MILLER
Lie to your men.
(off his look)
Not in so many words, maybe, but that's what it boils down to. Tell 'em it's okay, tell 'em they won't die...or if they do, it'll mean something. Keep their morale up, keep 'em going, tell 'em it's all for a reason. And then lie to yourself...convince yourself you're not full of shit...

SARGE
Does it work?

MILLER
Most of the time. Some guy dies, you say no big deal...because of him, three other guys'll live. Or five. Or ten. Maybe a hundred. You you work the numbers any way you want...long as it keeps you going. So you forget that guy, pretend you never even knew him. Makes it easier to send the next guy down.

SARGE
(pause, softly)
The numbers catching up with you, John?

Miller ponders the question.

MILLER
Who the hell is Ryan anyway? I wouldn't know him to look at him. You put him in front of me side by side with Wade, tell me I have to shoot one or the other...no contest. I'm not gonna trade Wade for this guy. Not a chance.

But they did trade Wade for Ryan. Sarge looks at Miller's face, sees that dead spot in his eyes.

SARGE
Captain? All due respect, sir. I think you're just about used up.

Miller says nothing. No argument.

REIBEN AND THE OTHERS

are done with burial. They're sitting and waiting, having a smoke. Somebody passes the pack to Caparzo. He takes one...and sees the German staring. Caparzo hesitates, offers. The German takes a cigarette, nods thanks. Reiben glances over.

REIBEN
What are you giving him a smoke for? What are you, stupid?

CAPARZO
He did his share of digging.

MELLISH
He should, the bastard.

CAPARZO
C'mon, pass the lighter.

REIBEN
Oh, he gets my lighter, too? What next, press his trousers?

Caparzo waits. Reiben gives in, tosses his Zippo. The German catches it, lights up, clicks it shut. He notices the lighter is engraved -- a Mickey Mouse hand-done in rough GI style.

GERMAN
Micky Maus.

They all look at him. He gives them a tentative smile...and mimes a steamboat wheel, bouncing jauntily up and down.

GERMAN
Steamboat Willie. Oompah, oompah, oompah...

(CONTINUED)

REIBEN
Tell Steamboat Willie to cut the shit or I'll kill him. I don't care what the Captain says.

Upham motions the German silent -- this is not the time. The German complies, passes the lighter to Caparzo. (NOTE: From now on the German will be referred to as Steamboat Willie.)

JACKSON
Goose-stepping asshole. Bet it was him who killed Wade.

REIBEN
Not just him. Ryan, too.
(off their looks)
We wouldn't even be out here if not for him. Hitler should pin a medal on the prick. There's gonna be payback, just wait.

Miller and Sarge walk up.

SARGE
Gear up, we're moving out.

Everybody hesitates. Upham says what they're all thinking:

UPHAM
Shouldn't we say a few words? For Wade, I mean?

MILLER
Wade who? I knew a Wade once, but he's dead. He died so long ago nobody remembers him. Now get off your ass and gear up.

Looks are traded, but nobody argues. They rise as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - RIDGE - NEARING DUSK

The sun is descending from a canopy of clouds. Miller and his men traverse the ridge with Steamboat Willie, heading into the farm valley below...

EXT - FARM VALLEY - DUSK

They come trudging across a field. Upham's moving among the men, passing out the last of the meager k-ration crackers.

JACKSON
That the last of it?

UPHAM
'Fraid so.

CAPARZO
Screw it, it's like eating cardboard anyway.

MELLISH
I'm so hungry I'd eat anything right now...

Upham appears at that moment to give him his cracker. Mellish shoots him the most baleful look imaginable -- almost insane.

MELLISH
You're starting to look like a leg of lamb with mint sauce.

Upham gives him the cracker, hurries nervously on.

REIBEN
Let's not talk about food, okay? Anything else is fine. Not food.

The men fall silent in tacit agreement. There's a SOFT MOO off to the right. They glance idly in that direction, see a COW lying in the grass some twenty yards away. They think nothing of it, keep walking...

...until it starts to dawn on them like a slow-burning fuse, a look of "hey, wait a minute" on their faces. They pause.

MELLISH
Am I nuts, or did we just pass forty or fifty steaks back there?

JACKSON
Could be sixty.

They all look to Miller, who's very hesitant about this:

MILLER
Fellas. It's not that I don't sympathize, believe me -- but I wonder if this is the proper venue for a Texas-style cookout. The Germans are bound to see a fire...

REIBEN
Sir, there are fires all over. What's one more?

He points. A town is burning on the horizon.

CAPARZO
Captain, you say the word, I will personally drag that cow twenty miles to that town over there and hold it over a burning building.

Miller hesitates, looks to Sarge.

SARGE
We could build a small fire inside a barn...long as we're careful.
(beat)
We need food, sir. There's no getting around that.

Miller thinks, scans their expectant faces. Finally:

MILLER
Let's go shoot the cow.

The men are delighted, turn around and go back.

The cow watches them approach with dark, languid eyes. She lets out a SOFT MOO as they gather.

MILLER
Okay, who's gonna do it?

The men glance around, hoping for a volunteer.

SARGE
C'mon, guys, we're in a war, for Chrissakes. Shooting a cow should not present a problem.

UPHAM
Maybe we should draw straws.

REIBEN
Screw that, I'll do it. Step aside.

He moves in front of the cow, clicks the safety off his M-1.

REIBEN
Any last requests? Blindfold? Cigarette?

She just stares at him. He raises his rifle, aims right between her eyes...and hesitates as:

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
Entschuldigung, ich möchte nicht unterbrechen...aber vielleicht solltet Ihr sie noch nicht erschiessen.

UPHAM
He says we shouldn't shoot her yet...warum nicht?

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
Ich denke, sie steht kurz vor 'ner Geburt.

Upham goes pale, peers toward the back of the cow.

REIBEN
What? What is it?

UPHAM
She's about to give birth.

A long, frozen beat.

MILLER
You're kidding me.

UPHAM
I don't think so, sir.

CAPARZO
Jackson, you're a country boy, check it out.

Jackson circles behind the cow and squats down, peering.

JACKSON
Oh, yeah. She wants to pop all right. I think she needs help. C'mon, Caparzo, learn something...

CAPARZO
...oh no, not me...

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
(crouching)
Hier, ich glaub' ich kann helfen...

JACKSON
We need a third man. Upham, hunker down here, boy...

Upham looks to Miller and Sarge -- do I have to?

SARGE
Don't argue, Corporal, just do it.

MILLER
That's an order.

Upham squats down, looking distinctly queasy.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON
C'mon, don't be squeamish, it's just a cow. Reach up in there...

UPHAM
...oh, God...

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
Fertig? Auf drei...

UPHAM
...on three, we go on three...

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
Eins...zwei...drei!

The three men pull for all they're worth...and are rewarded with a brand new calf. It slides out, thrashes unsteadily to its feet. It totters over to momma and starts to feed.

Pause. Miller and his men start sneaking looks at one another. Somebody finally says what's on everybody's mind:

REIBEN
I'm not as hungry as I thought.

CAPARZO
Me neither.

MELLISH
I can wait.

They move on, leaving the cow behind as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - WOODS - NIGHT

Miller and his men finish digging in for the night -- they've expanded a ditch with shovels to create a communal foxhole. Everybody's exhausted beyond words -- trading shovels for blankets, settling in, trying to get comfortable.

SARGE
Reiben, you're first watch.

Reiben sighs, grabs his rifle. Miller tosses him a blanket.

MILLER
I know you're tired, but stay sharp.

REIBEN
Yes sir, sharp, that's me...

Reiben climbs up out of the ditch, sits cross-legged on the edge, settles in. He pulls the blanket around himself, rifle propped between his knees.

REIBEN
...sharp as a tack...

SOFT SNORING from below. The others are already falling asleep. Reiben finds himself alone, staring off at the woods, listening to crickets in the night...

REIBEN
...sharp...

...and it soon becomes apparent that he's desperately trying to stay awake. And it seems the harder he tries, the more sleep wants to claim him...the more it wants to make him...

...drift off...

No! He shakes himself awake, forces his eyes open. Not gonna drift off that easy, not a chance...no way...

...I'll just stare at the night...listen to the crickets chirping...nothing moving out there...

...quiet and dark as can be...stay sharp...that's me...

His head nods. His helmet goes clunk against the rifle. Let's face it, the poor bastard just fell asleep.

CAMERA PULLS SLOWLY BACK. Reiben's dead to the world, still sitting upright...

Then, in the background:

A GERMAN SOLDIER with a Schmeisser enters the clearing from the edge of frame, not ten yards away...

...and then ANOTHER GERMAN...and then TWO MORE...and, holy shit, there are dozens of them in the shadows...

The first German looks over this way, sees Reiben sitting there (just a shadowy figure from where he's standing).

GERMAN #1
(turns, loud whisper)
Das ist es, genau hier!

Reiben snaps wide awake. Frozen like a statue. Did I just hear German being spoken behind me?

A flurry of activity and noise suddenly bursts on us as a COMPANY OF WEHRMACHT converges on this area: ENGINES growling, VOICES calling out, lights sweeping through the foliage...

The GIs wake up in a total panic, thrashing their blankets aside, grabbing for weapons. Hands reach up and grab Reiben, yank him down into the ditch. Everybody's expecting to go out in a blaze of gunfire at any moment...

...but the Germans are just going about their business in the background. DIESEL ENGINES ROAR CLOSER. A GERMAN SOLDIER backs slowly across the clearing, motioning with his hands...

GERMAN #3
Ja, das ist gut...weiter...nach links...etwas weiter...

...and the MUZZLE OF A TIGER TANK comes easing through the low branches.

GERMAN #3
Gut! Halt hier!

The muzzle stops -- that's all we'll see of the tank. For that matter, everything around us is more suggested than seen; we're conveying an impression of scale with noises, lights, voices calling to one another. Somebody hollers loudly:

VOICE (O.S.)
Abschalten! Alle ruhig sein!

We hear ENGINES SHUTTING DOWN all over the area...

...and silence takes over again. The night returns.

Miller and the others are frozen f.g., holding their breath, fingers on triggers. If it were physically possible for human beings to shit bricks, that's exactly what they'd be doing.

Germans are puttering around b.g., making camp, getting homey. One guy's whistling "Pretty Baby" under his breath. Now that it's quiet, they speak in low tones or whispers.

GERMANS #4 and #5 are at the back of a supply truck, fiddling with a shortwave radio. They go past a speech by Goebbels, past a broadcast of Wagner's "The Ring"...and tune in to Armed Forces Radio. It's the Benny Goodman Orchestra performing "How High the Moon" with vocalist Helen Forrest.

GERMAN #4
(whispering)
Benny Goodman...klasse...

GERMAN #5
(motioning)
Sshhh...mach's leiser...

They tweak the volume down and drift away to other parts of the clearing, going about their business.

(CONTINUED)

A portly infantryman named DIETER settles in no more than fifteen feet from Miller and our group. He pulls off his boots, rubs his aching feet. He looks over this way, calls softly to our guys in the ditch:

DIETER
Habt Ihr mal 'ne Zigarette?

Upham throws a look of panic -- he's talking to us!

DIETER
Du da, im Graben. Ich rede mit Dir.
Haste 'ne Zigarette?

Upham's white as a sheet. Facial expressions and hand gestures come in a jumbled rush: for God's sakes, don't answer -- we have to answer -- what are you, nuts? -- what if he comes over here? -- shit -- okay, say something -- what should I say?

Dieter rises, peering, wondering why they don't answer:

DIETER
Stimmt was nicht?

Upham finally speaks up:

UPHAM
Uh...nein. Wir suchen nach 'ner Zigarette.

DIETER
Wunderbar, danke.

Dieter turns away, starts puttering with his gear. A fierce flurry of whispering ensues:

UPHAM
Who's got a cigarette?

MILLER
What for?

UPHAM
He wants a cigarette! Gimme a damn cigarette!

Somebody hands him the rest of a pack.

CAPARZO
Now what, genius? Throw it at him?

Upham's mind races. Dieter's looking this way again.

DIETER
Und: wie sieht's aus?

Steamboat Willie motions to Upham -- here, give me the damn cigarettes! Everybody looks to Miller -- we gonna trust the prisoner? Miller sees no choice, whispers:

MILLER
He tries any shit, he takes the first bullet.

UPHAM
(translates)
Wenn Du irgendwas versuchst, erschiessen wir Dich.

Willie tosses Miller an irritated look -- duh, no kidding. He rises from the ditch, walks over to Dieter.

Our guys hold their breath. Praying.

Willie offers a cigarette from the pack. Dieter takes one, nods thanks...and pats his pockets. Beat.

DIETER
Hast Du Feuer?

No need to translate that gesture. Miller and the men roll their eyes toward heaven -- shit!

Steamboat Willie turns, comes back. He crouches at the edge of the ditch and reaches down, snapping his fingers for the lighter -- c'mon, c'mon.

Reiben's patting his pockets, eyes wide. Holy crap, where's my lighter? They launch into a frantic search -- shit, where the hell's the goddamn lighter?

Reiben finds it -- here! Everybody sags with relief. Steamboat Willie takes it, goes back to Dieter, lights his cigarette.

DIETER
Danke.

Dieter blows the smoke out, checks the cigarette.

DIETER
Amerikanische? Wo zum Teufel hast'n amerikanische Zigaretten her?

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
(hesitates)
Von Amerikanern, natürlich.

Dieter chuckles appreciatively, notices the lighter.

DIETER
Micky Maus? Kann ich mal sehen?

(CONTINUED)

He takes the lighter, clicks it admiringly a few times.

DIETER
Willst Du tauschen?

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
(considers a beat)
Hast Du irgend etwas zu essen?

DIETER
Massig. Ich tausch' Dir gegen das Feuerzeug und mehr Zigaretten.

Steamboat Willie nods -- done deal. Dieter happily pockets the lighter. Steamboat Willie heads back. In whispers:

REIBEN
Son of a bitch stole my lighter...

UPHAM
We're swapping for food.

CAPARZO
Really?

Looks are traded -- this could be a good idea.

MILLER
C'mon, c'mon, cigarettes...

The GIs turn out their pockets, handing up cigarettes and whatever else they've got. Mellish hands up a yo-yo. Steamboat Willie takes it, gives him a look -- a yo-yo? Mellish responds with a shooing motion -- go on, trade it.

In the b.g., Dieter's been raiding the larder for sausages, cheese, bread, a slab of bacon...but he can't find the knife. He turns, calls softly to Steamboat Willie:

DIETER
Bring ein Messer mit.

Steamboat Willie looks at Upham -- good luck breaking that news. Upham cringes a bit as he does:

UPHAM
He needs a knife.

REIBEN
Christ, let's just give the Kraut my rifle.

JACKSON
We've gone this far, haven't we?

Beat. Miller nods, looks to Mellish.

MILLER
Give the Kraut his knife back.

MELLISH
Caparzo's got it.

CAPARZO
No I don't, you had it last...

MELLISH
...no I didn't, you did...

A frantic search fails to turn it up. Exasperated, Miller pulls his own combat knife, hands it up to Steamboat Willie.

MILLER
I better get that back.

Steamboat Willie nods like he understands, goes back to Dieter, starts unloading the goods: cigarettes, yo-yo...

DIETER
Ein Jojo?

Willie shrugs -- why not? And then he proudly offers up the final item: Miller's combat knife.

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
Ich hab' sogar ein amerikanisches Armee-Messer.

UPHAM
He just traded your knife...

MILLER
Son of a bitch...

The transaction goes down -- Dieter carves off hunks of bacon, slabs of cheese, sausages, half a loaf of bread, a few tins of sardines. Steamboat Willie gathers it all up.

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
War mir ein Vergnügen, mit Euch Geschäfte zu machen.

DIETER
Jederzeit...

Steamboat Willie comes back, re-joins Miller and the others in the ditch. There's a pause, everybody staring at the food as if it were the Grail itself...and then Steamboat Willie earns a few grateful smiles, a nod or two of growing respect -- wow, that was good, you actually pulled it off...

(CONTINUED)

The food is passed around, bitten into, torn apart, consumed. No mistaking the joy in the faces of these men -- hell, we got us a feast! Hey, pass that cheese...whoa, slow down on the salami, I haven't had any yet...

...and suddenly there's frantic scurrying in the clearing behind them, some fast whispering:

GERMANS
(various, ad-lib)
Stell's ab...Scheisse, er kommt...

The Germans kill the shortwave, hide their stuff, scramble to look soldierly...

...as MAJOR HOESS strolls into the clearing. He's a frosty bastard, an S.S. tank commander in black Panzer gear, the Aryan ideal -- blond, flinty blue eyes, broad shoulders, perfect posture. He peers around, speaks ever so softly:

HOESS
Ich dachte, ich hör Musik. Benny Goodman.

He gives them a faint, steely smile. I must have imagined it. Good thing, too...for all your sakes. He walks on...

...right past our GIs in the ditch. His boots pass a mere foot or two above their heads...and then he's gone, leaving one thought on everybody's minds. Sarge whispers it to Miller:

SARGE
What happens in the morning?
They'll see us at first light...

Miller has no answer for them. Everybody falls silent as we

DISSOLVE TO:

Fog. Glorious, wonderful fog. Thick as pea-soup.

We hear DIESEL ENGINES ROAR. A HUGE SHAPE goes by -- a tank. In its wake trudges German infantry, though we see them only as vague shapes. It's dawn, the Germans are leaving...

BOOM DOWN to Miller and his men in the ditch. They're holding their breath, listening to the Germans depart, scarcely able to believe their good luck.

CUT TO:

EXT - FIELD - MORNING

The fog is lifting. Steamboat Willie stands facing Miller and the men, waiting. Miller looks to Upham.

MILLER
Tell him thanks. You know, for bailing us out last night.

UPHAM
Mein Hauptmann bedankt sich für die Hilfe letzte Nacht.

Willie nods. Miller pulls a canteen, tosses it to him.

MILLER
If he follows the tank tracks, he should catch up with them.

UPHAM
Er sagt, Du sollst den Panzerspuren folgen.

Steamboat Willie turns and walks off...but stops, turns back:

STEAMBOAT WILLIE
Tut mir leid für den Mann, den ihr verloren habt. Den Sanitäter. Das ist halt Krieg, nicht wahr?

UPHAM
He says he's sorry about Wade. He just wanted us to know that.

REIBEN
(beat)
Tell him to kiss my ass. He owes me a lighter.

Steamboat Willie looks to Upham for the translation.

UPHAM
Er sagt...auf Wiedersehen.

Steamboat Willie nods, gives a little wave, turns and walks on. Miller and his men head off in the other direction as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - COUNTRYSIDE (NEARING RAMELLE) - DAY

Miller and the men trudge wearily into view. They pause, gazing down...and CAMERA COMES AROUND to reveal Ramelle less than half a mile away. Things seem quiet down there.

EXT - FIELD/OUTSKIRTS OF RAMELLE - DAY

The GIs are approaching town through a field of tall grass. All seems very still and silent here, unusually so. There's nothing to greet them so far but buzzing insects.

The SOUND OF AN ENGINE brings their heads around. A GERMAN HALF-TRACK comes out of nowhere, barreling across the field with a SIX MAN SQUAD OF SUPPORTING INFANTRY running through the grass. A GERMAN GUNNER on the half-track OPENS FIRE with a MOUNTED MACHINE GUN...

The GIs take off running in the direction of town, crashing through the tall grass as BULLETS WHINE like hornets...

They reach a drainage culvert, beyond which are railroad tracks. They jump into the culvert, sliding down as bullets CHEW the lip, missing them by inches...

...they splash across the thin trickle of muddy water at the bottom of the culvert, try to scramble up the other side to the railroad tracks above...

...but MACHINE GUN BULLETS SHATTER the wooden ties, driving them back down into the ditch. Desperation time -- they're stuck in the culvert with the half-track bearing down on them from the field side, plus the six Germans on foot...

There's nothing they can do except take the bastards on. They thrust their weapons over the lip of the culvert and OPEN FIRE...for all the good it does. The half-track keeps coming with MACHINE GUN BLAZING...forty yards...thirty...twenty...

VOICE (O.S.)
HEADS DOWN!

They whirl around in surprise as --

-- a FLASH OF BAZOOKA BLOWBACK sends a projectile right over their heads. WHAM! It nails the half-track dead on, rips it apart with a FIERY BLAST. The vehicle somersaults forward in flames, flips upside-down, skids to a stop at the edge of the ditch right in front of their noses. And before Miller and the others can so much as blink --

-- FOUR AIRBORNE TROOPERS lunge up out of the grass like phantoms and OPEN FIRE with submachine guns, raking the German infantrymen off their feet...

Silence. Miller and his men are stunned. They gaze up at the YOUNG PARATROOPER with the smoking bazooka who just saved their lives. He's tall and athletic, a good-looking blond kid kneeling on the railroad tracks, looking down at them with a touch of amusement in his eyes.

RYAN
I'm Ryan. Who are you?

Off their stunned looks, we

CUT TO:

EXT - RAMELLE BRIDGE - DAY

The town lies in shattered ruin from Allied bombing. Miller and his men approach the bridge escorted by Ryan and the four troopers from the field -- SANDERS, TOYNBE, WELLER, O'TOOLE.

OTHER PARATROOPERS watch them approach, a few even melting out of the woodwork as they pass. The bridge is where most of the men are; it's clearly the key spot being held. There are two heavily sandbagged machine gun emplacements -- one at each end of the bridge.

We're seeing just over a dozen paratroopers in total, all privates. And as tired as Miller and his men are, these guys look worse -- haggard, unshaven, some wounded. They look like the settlers in some western who've been holding the fort against constant Apache raids.

ON THE BRIDGE

Miller's group arrives at the bridge. CORPORAL HENDERSON (the only non-private) moves from the sandbag emplacement to meet them, flanked by RICE and TRASK.

HENDERSON
Sir, if you're our relief, I'm filing a complaint.

MILLER
Can't say I blame you. Who's your commanding officer?

Henderson cocks his head. Miller turns to look. SEVERAL DOZEN CORPSES lie covered with tarps along the riverbank.

HENDERSON
That would have been Captain Jennings, sir. I'm afraid the best we can muster right now is a corporal -- that's me, Henderson.
(beat)
What are you guys doing here?

Miller nods his head at Ryan.

MILLER
We came looking for him.

RYAN
(surprised)
Me?

MILLER
James Francis Ryan? Ohio?

RYAN
Yeah, Mansfield, Ohio. What's this about?

MILLER
I'm sorry to have tell you this, James. Your brothers have all been killed in action.

A pause as Ryan tries to absorb this. Softly:

RYAN
On the level?

MILLER
'Fraid so.

The tough paratrooper melts away, replaced by the teenage boy who just found out that the brothers he grew up with...and loved deeply...are dead.

It's certainly worth a few tears. He sheds them fairly stoically under the circumstances. The others wait. Some of Ryan's buddies look away, feeling bad. Let him get it out.

He wipes his eyes, finds his voice:

RYAN
You came all the way out here just to tell me that?

MILLER
(shakes his head)
They're sending you home. We have orders to bring you back.

RYAN
Bring me back, sir?

Miller nods. It takes Ryan a few moments to process it. It doesn't seem to make much sense to him either.

RYAN
Thing is...I have orders too. And they don't include deserting my post.

MILLER
(beat)
I understand...but this changes things.

RYAN
I don't see that it does, sir.

(CONTINUED)

MILLER
The Chief of Staff of the United States Army says it does.
(to all of them)
Look, you guys have been hanging on by your fingernails. Why don't you all fall back?

HENDERSON
Our orders don't provide for that, sir.

MILLER
What are your orders?

HENDERSON
Hold this bridge at all costs...to to the last man, if necessary. If all else fails, as an absolute last resort, we blow it up.

MILLER
Okay. Why don't we just skip the middle part and go straight to the blowing up? That way we can all get the hell out of here.

HENDERSON
Unacceptable, sir. Our people need this bridge intact, if at all possible.

Miller considers this, turns to Ryan:

MILLER
These guys want to stay, fine. But it's not your party anymore--

RYAN
--it damn well is--

MILLER
--it damn well isn't. Now I'm only saying this once, Private. You grab your gear and report within five minutes, we are moving out--

RYAN
I'm afraid I ref--

MILLER
--and don't even think of trying to refuse that order! You are denied that option!

(CONTINUED)

RYAN
I don't think so, sir!

Tempers are flaring as both men get in each other's faces:

MILLER
Listen to me, you little pissant, you have no idea what we went through to find you--

RYAN
--I don't much care, I didn't ask you to find me in the first place--

MILLER
--ungrateful bastard, you get your gear and I mean <u>now</u>--

RYAN
--not now or any <u>other</u> goddamn time--

MILLER
--that is a direct order--

RYAN
--<u>which I am refusing, sir!</u>

They're about two heartbeats away from coming to blows. The others pull them apart, but temperatures are still hot:

RYAN
Why don't you ask what <u>we've</u> been through? We were supposed to hold here for 48 hours! It's been a goddamn <u>week!</u> And what do we get? Relief? Armor support? No! We get <u>you</u>, with this ridiculous bullshit!

REIBEN
Hey, asshole, one of our people died looking for you!

RYAN
That supposed to be my fault?

REIBEN
You're goddamn right it is!

Now <u>they</u> have to be separated. Miller gets between everybody.

MILLER
What's so damn important about this bridge anyway?

HENDERSON
If the Germans roll across this bridge, there's about a hundred guys less than five miles down that road who are gonna get their asses kicked! That we cannot allow!

RYAN
(off Millers' look)
What are you worrying about me for? Start worrying about them!

MILLER
I wasn't told to keep them alive!

RYAN
We were!

REIBEN
(seething)
I say we take the son of a bitch anyway.

RYAN
What are you gonna do, shoot me?

REIBEN
Maybe that's not such a bad idea.

RYAN
Come on, infantry, try it!

Both sides are overheated, ready to go at it -- some men are even tensing up with weapons. Miller sees the volatility of the situation and holds up his hands, backing both sides off.

MILLER
Awright! Everybody count to ten!

He notices Upham scared, holding his M-1 at port arms.

MILLER
Stand down, you idiot. These are Americans. You're not allowed to shoot them.

Upham lowers the rifle. Miller pauses, taking deep breaths, calming down. He regards Ryan dourly, motions to him.

MILLER
Can I have a word with you? Sarge, you want to sit in on this?

(CONTINUED)

Ryan hesitates, joins them. They walk past Miller's men to the mouth of the bridge where they can talk privately. Sarge hovers just within earshot as:

MILLER
I've been getting people killed ever since I set foot in this goddamn cheese-eating country. Why can't you be the exception?

RYAN
Would <u>you</u> go?

MILLER
(beat)
Absolutely. I would absolutely go.

Ryan searches Miller's eyes...and smiles.

RYAN
You're not a very good liar, sir.

Miller blinks -- nobody ever accused him of that before. Ryan searches for the right words, and it's as simple as:

RYAN
These guys here? They're the only brothers I have left. There's no way I'm deserting them.

Ryan turns, walks back past Miller's men, re-joins the paratroopers at the barricade. Miller's completely at a loss, stares off across the river. Sarge moves to his side, still speaking privately:

SARGE
What are your orders, sir?

MILLER
Sergeant. We have crossed some strange boundary. Life has taken a turn for the surreal.

SARGE
Clearly, sir. But the question stands.

MILLER
What do <u>you</u> think?

SARGE
You don't really want to know, sir.

MILLER
Mike. I really do.

(CONTINUED)

Sarge hesitates, sees his sincerity, sighs.

SARGE
All this time we've been looking for this kid...most of us hating him, Reiben wanting him dead...I couldn't help thinking: what if this is what the whole war's about for us? What if we look back on this as old men, assuming we live, and figure that saving Private Ryan was the one decent and worthwhile thing we were able to pull out of this whole godawful shitty mess?
(beat)
That's what I was thinking, sir.

Miller takes this in.

MILLER
You sound like Wade.

SARGE
Who's Wade, sir? I didn't think you knew a Wade.

In that quiet moment, something clicks. Miller couldn't even put words to it if you asked, but it's there. He turns, goes back to the others. Everybody waits for him to speak.

MILLER
How do you propose to prevent the Germans from crossing this bridge?

HENDERSON
What's it to you, sir?

MILLER
It's become obvious to me that staying is the only hope I have of keeping Private Ryan alive.

The men are stunned, especially Reiben:

REIBEN
You gotta be shitting me--!

Miller whirls, cuts him off fiercely:

MILLER
Not a word out of you, Reiben! Not a goddamn word!
(turns back)
Tell me the plan.

HENDERSON
We've got the machine gun emplacements you see...plus we mined the road through town...

MILLER
Machine guns and mines. Good, that'll slow 'em down for thirty seconds, what else?
(off their silence)
You think they're gonna come at us with donkey carts? If this bridge is vital to us, you can be damn sure it's vital to them. So far they've been picking on you with a little infantry, but when they come for real, they'll be coming with tanks. Now exactly what do we intend to do about it?

Off their looks, we

CUT TO:

Weapons and explosives are laid out on the ground, arrayed for inspection. ANGLE UP to Miller and Sarge as:

TRASK
This is everything. Five thirty caliber machine guns, seventeen grenades, eleven anti-personnel mines, four bazookas with less than a dozen rounds, the flamethrower, assorted M-1s and Thompsons...

RICE
Might as well be pea-shooters if they roll on us with tanks.

Everybody knows he's right. Sarge notices Miller staring off down the road that curves from sight through town.

SARGE
What are you thinking, sir?

MILLER
I'm thinking they're gonna come rolling right up the middle of that road and flatten us...
(points)
...unless we can disable the lead tank <u>there</u>...between those buildings, where the rubble makes a bottleneck.

RYAN
Disable him?

MILLER
Yeah, you know, turn him into a 60 ton roadblock. We do that, the tanks behind him will have to leave the road and try to get around. That means plowing through some buildings. Tall order, even for tanks.

The others are starting to get it, to see the potential:

HENDERSON
Yeah. We can split 'em up that way, make 'em more vulnerable...take 'em on while they're bogged down in the rubble...

MILLER
...right, hit 'em hard, one on one, keep falling back toward the bridge.

SARGE
I'd say three machine gun teams to pin down their infantry...two for displacement, number three up in belltower. Piss a little bad news down on their heads.

MILLER
Good idea. Jackson, you could use some company up there, right?

JACKSON
I'm guessing that makes me spotter?

Miller nods, looks around for reactions.

REIBEN
It's not the worst idea ever, sir...it's just that everything depends on knocking out that lead tank, right?
(Miller nods)
How exactly do we do that?

CAPARZO
Reiben's right. As our esteemed colleague in Airborne pointed out, what we got here are peashooters. So how do we stop the tank?

MILLER
Sticky bomb.

(CONTINUED)

That puts a pause in the conversation. Everybody looks at Miller like he's nuts.

RYAN
Sticky bomb, sir?

HENDERSON
You're making that up.

MILLER
It's in the manual of arms, you can check it yourself.

RYAN
We would, sir, if we had a manual of arms handy. Lacking one, perhaps you could enlighten us.

MILLER
You have TNT?

TOYNBE
That's the one thing we got plenty of. Stanz and I wired the bridge with enough combination B to blow it up twice.

MILLER
Then you can spare some. What you do is, you take a standard issue GI sock, cram as much TNT into it as you can, rig a simple fuse, then coat the whole thing with axle grease. That way, when you throw it, it sticks. Sticky bomb.
(off their looks)
You think of another way to knock the treads off a tank?

Looks are traded -- no, they can't.

REIBEN
Great. Now we gotta give up our socks.

CUT TO:

SEQUENCE OF BATTLE PREPARATIONS:

UNDER THE BRIDGE

Toynbe and Stanz (the 17 year-old paratrooper that Ryan helped hook up during the parachute drop at the beginning of the movie) are dangling in harnesses under the bridge, working on a network of ropes. They're pulling down TNT charges, handing

them across to Sanders and O'Toole, who relay them up to --

ON THE BRIDGE

-- Upham and Mellish, who bring them to Miller and a row of men. There's a sticky bomb assembly line happening. Caparzo stuffs a sock full of TNT, hands it off to someone.

CAPARZO
I feel like goddamn Santa Claus...

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson emerges from the trapdoor, turns back, takes his sniper rifle as somebody hands it up. Next comes a thirty caliber machine gun. CAMERA SHIFTS to the trapdoor to reveal Parker and Weller on the ladder below, relaying up ammo belts, satchels of supplies...

IN THE RUBBLE

Machine Gun Team #1 consists of two Airborne troopers named LYLE and FALLON. They're picking a spot, settling in, sighting their barrel down the street. Upham appears with four ammo belts, gives them two, moves on...

...and we follow him as he hurries through the rubble to Machine Gun Team #2: Mellish and Caparzo are positioning their weapon "inside" a collapsed building, angling the muzzle through what used to be a window. Mellish starts oiling the bolt, working it back and forth.

MELLISH
Upham, listen to me. You listening? When the shit comes down, we'll be displacing and falling back like crazy sons of bitches, so you gotta be Johnny-on-the-spot with the ammo, understand?

Upham takes a deep breath, nods. Caparzo ruffles his hair.

CAPARZO
Hey. Everybody's scared...

MOUTH OF THE BRIDGE

Miller strides from town with a group that includes Sarge and Henderson, checking angles of fire. They stop at the first sandbagged emplacement just past the bridge entrance.

MILLER
Machine gun number four looks good right here...not bad for a forward position...

He looks out across the bridge to the emplacement at the far end. Machine gun #5.

MILLER
That one over there? That's the Alamo. They push us back that far...last man alive blows the bridge.

TOYNBE
We got a 30 second delay on the switch. If you're that last man, better get off the bridge fast or you won't be alive for long.

The others nod grimly. Ryan looks to Miller.

RYAN
Where am I during all this?

MILLER
Never more than two feet away from me. That's not negotiable.

ALONG THE STREET

Demolition teams are carefully hiding the anti-personnel mines along walls, behind shutters, in window boxes. They're angling the devices to blow out into the street on the horizontal to take down some infantry...

IN THE RUBBLE

Men are picking positions, hunkering in the rubble, finding lines of sight toward the street...

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Parker's got himself a machine gun nest now, muzzle aimed down through the balusters. ANGLE TO Jackson as he sweeps his sniper rifle up and over the balustrade, targeting one end of the street to the other, eye pressed to the scope, checking freedom of movement. He does it again, practicing the move...

SEQUENCE ENDS as we

CUT TO:

EXT - RAMELLE - DAY

Midday at its hottest. The air is motionless. For that matter, so is everything else. The buildings stand mute and desolate. Nothing's buzzing except the flies. Even the river seems to be holding its breath.

ON THE BRIDGE/FORWARD EMPLACEMENT

The men sit waiting, suffering the heat, everybody quiet with their thoughts. Ryan breaks the silence:

RYAN
What was the name of the guy who got killed coming up here?

None of Miller's men answer. They look to Miller, knowing the subject is taboo. Miller surprises them by responding:

MILLER
Wade. His name was Wade.
(beat)
He was our medic.

RYAN
Good man?

Miller looks to the others -- tell him.

CAPARZO
The best.

Ryan nods, pauses. Softly:

RYAN
My brothers would kick my ass if they knew somebody died trying to keep me alive.

They all look at him. He smiles sadly. Even Reiben smiles back. Ryan glances to Miller and innocently asks:

RYAN
Where you from, Captain?

A <u>long</u> beat. Smiles are growing on the faces of Miller's men as they wait -- is he gonna answer? Ryan picks up that something's going on, though he's not sure exactly what.

MILLER
I'm afraid that's classified.

The others give Ryan pointed looks -- do <u>not</u> let him get away with that. Ryan's catching on, decides to have some fun:

RYAN
That's not fair, is it? You know where <u>I'm</u> from. Mansfield, Ohio.
(off Miller's look)
You come all this way, you risk your life for me, you won't even tell me where you're from?

Miller knows he's trapped. His men are all wearing big shit-eating grins, waiting.

REIBEN
If you lie, you go to hell.

Miller takes a final pause, then:

MILLER
Addley, Pennsylvania. High school English teacher.

A beat. Then the chuckling starts...and builds. Miller's men can't believe it. They start laughing harder as it sinks in.

REIBEN
I enlisted to get away from people like you...

This gets them laughing even harder -- and you can damn well believe it feels good. As the laughter starts to die:

MILLER
I also coach the baseball team.

This sets them off again into renewed gales of laughter. Reiben's holding himself, trying to breathe, falls over -- -- and a CRAZED SCREAM freezes the laughter in their throats and the blood in their veins. They scramble to the sandbags, snatching up weapons, gazing toward town...

...where two lunatics are racing from the rubble with a heavy rectangular wooden object on their shoulders. They're weaving, damn near losing their balance, hollering every step of the way. There's a third man bringing up the rear, his arms loaded down with a stack of...something.

SARGE
What the hell?

It's a trio of paratroopers: Sanders, GARRITY, WILSON. Miller and the others come off the bridge as they race up, almost dropping the wooden object. A couple of guys jump in, help them ease the object to the ground -- a Victrola.

MELLISH
Holy Magee, does it work?

GARRITY
Does it ever! And brother, that's not all -- look!

Wilson runs up with the stack in his arms -- records.

(CONTINUED)

HENDERSON
Stacks of wax!

WILSON
Not just <u>any</u> wax! It's the real deal, boys...
(shuffling them)
...Stan Kenton, the Dorseys, Les Elgart, Jimmie Lunceford...

<u>They all see it at the same time and shout it at the sky together:</u>

ALL THE MEN
BENNNYY GOOODMAAANNN!

MILLER AND SARGE

are watching this crazed activity -- the men are swarming around the Victrola, excited as hell, elbows flying as they try to get the thing cranked up.

Sarge gives Miller a look -- do I stop this? Miller shakes his head, reponds gently:

MILLER
Let 'em.

Sarge knows what Miller's thinking -- this could be the last fun these boys ever have.

THE VICTROLA

starts spinning. The record is placed on the spindle. TILT UP to all the excited faces. Reiben grins at the paratroopers, dialogue flowing fast and loose:

REIBEN
You boys are gonna see some jitterbug now.

RYAN
Oh, from you, huh?

REIBEN
Damn right, Airborne. Dance <u>your</u> ass under the table.

O'TOOLE
Flapdoodle is what that is.

CAPARZO
Oh yeah, we taking bets?

(CONTINUED)

Everybody's shouting, taking bets, laying their money down. Reiben's already warming up, showing his moves. He's good. A few paratroopers pull Ryan aside for a quick conference:

HENDERSON
This guy looks good. Who we gonna put up against him?

RYAN
Stanz.

RICE
(like he's nuts)
Stanz? Stanz can't dance.

RYAN
Stanz can dance.

HENDERSON
(trading glances)
You've seen Stanz dance?

RYAN
Brother, have I seen Stanz dance.
(off their looks)
I'm tellin' ya.

Okay, done. The huddle breaks up as:

HENDERSON
Stanz! Front and center!

Stanz comes up shyly from the back. We really get our first real look at the guy -- the most shy, awkward, gawky, skinny kid we've ever seen. It's entirely possible he's never even spoken. Reiben looks to Ryan and the others, perplexed.

REIBEN
This?

The paratroopers nod. Caparzo pumps his fists in the air:

CAPARZO
DOUBLING ALL BETS!

A renewed round of shouting and betting. Upham is entrusted with the bets, clutching money in both fists. The needle descends and:

"Sing, Sing, Sing" begins. That awesome drum intro followed by those teasing, ramping horns. Pure hormonal, musical joy.

Reiben starts solo, showing off a bit of his style -- then grabs Mellish as a partner. Spinning and jiving. Guy's great.

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson and Parker are laughing at what they see happening down at the bridge. They can't believe it.

REIBEN

spins Mellish away, motions to Stanz -- go ahead, beat that. Stanz hesitates, glances uncertainly to Ryan. Ryan nods. Go on, buddy, kick his ass...

...and Stanz proceeds to do just that. Whatever else he may be, Stanz is a jitterbugging maniac. God apparently created him for one purpose, and this is it -- he's loose-limbed, acrobatic, stunning.

Reiben's jaw drops. He looks to the others -- we may be in trouble. They glare back -- do better!

Reiben jumps back in, now dancing opposite Stanz. They come together as partners, spin, twirl, pull away. Those horns are slipping and sliding, the drum pounding like crazed tom-toms.

They keep going harder and harder, each trying to outdo the other. Here come those drums again, spurring them on to even greater heights. Everybody's crowding around them, screaming encouragement, clapping and jiving to the tune...

...and for a brief moment there is no war here. There's just a bunch of boys having the time of their lives, grabbing the maximum amount of joy they can...

...while it lasts.

MILLER

is the first to sense it. He gazes off, listening, smile fading. Something's throbbing in the air...something besides drums. What the hell is that?

Sarge senses it too. Something under the music. Miller gets down off the sandbags, walks over the Victrola.

Some of the men are starting to hear it now...they're pausing, listening. Stanz and Reiben are still dancing, oblivious.

Miller lifts the Victrola needle. Dead silence...

...except for the DEEP RUMBLE OF DIESEL ENGINES coming this way. A pause, a breathless hush...

MILLER
Here they come.

...and the men scramble toward town to get ready for battle.

(CONTINUED)

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson and Parker are tense as hell as the RUMBLING GROWS EVER LOUDER. DIESEL FUMES are rippling over the rooftops, coming this way, distorting the air with heat haze.

VARIOUS ANGLES IN TOWN

as the Americans prepare. Cocking weapons. Sighting down muzzles. Crouching in debris. Ducking past broken shutters.

MILLER'S POSITION

is the building nearest the square and the bridge. Ryan's at his side, with Sarge and Toynbe. Miller raises binoculars --

BINOCULAR POV: BELLTOWER

-- and brings Jackson into focus. Jackson's peering off through his rifle scope to see what's coming.

IN THE BELLTOWER

JACKSON
I'm seeing Tigers. Two of 'em.

Parker relays this using hands signals -- he holds up two fingers, then makes a "T" with his hands...

MILLER

has his binoculars riveted to the belltower. Parker holds up two fingers again, and this time makes a "P."

MILLER
Two tigers. Two panzers. Four total.

MELLISH AND CAPARZO

are at their machine gun, also watching the belltower.

MELLISH
Tigers. Shit. It hadda be Tigers.

VARIOUS ANGLES

The ground itself is starting to vibrate. Bits of plaster and debris start breaking loose, drifting from the rafters...

THE LEAD TANK

looms into view around the curve of the street...<u>huge</u>. A King Tiger. It rumbles and clanks like a prehistoric monster, treads crushing the cobblestones to dust. Riding the turret is a haughty S.S. tank commander we've seen before -- <u>Major Hoess.</u>

(CONTINUED)

TANK #2 now looms into sight: another Tiger. On the heels of that come TANKS #3 and #4: a pair of Panzers.

Trooping along in the wake of the armor is a COMPANY OF WEHRMACHT INFANTRY about a hundred men strong. Steamboat Willie is among them, toting a Schmeisser.

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson and Parker peer down as the procession passes awesomely below. It looks like really bad news from up here.

SIX "STICKY BOMB" MEN

are hidden in various positions along both sides of the street, sticky bombs ready. Reiben is one of them...plus Wilson, Henderson, Weller, Garrity, Trask. The bombs are gooey and bizarre, like big globs of grease with fuses.

MILLER'S GROUP

Toynbe's got his hand on a detonator switch, eyes riveted to Miller, waiting for the signal. Miller has his hand poised, watching the lead tank gets closer...wait...wait...wait...

...now. Toynbe throws the switch --

ANGLE ON STREET

-- and thunderous hell breaks loose as the ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES DETONATE massively along both sides of the street. The walls blow out toward the infantry, taking them down with concussion and shrapnel, killing at least a dozen men...

The MACHINE GUNS OPEN FIRE at the same moment, turning the street into a killing zone:

MACHINE GUN #1: Lyle and Fallon are raking the street from one direction...

MACHINE GUN #2: Caparzo and Mellish hammer the infantry from another direction...

MACHINE GUN #3: Parker is spraying the street from up in the belltower, raining bullets down on the Germans. Jackson is next to him, drawing a sniper's bead on Major Hoess...

THE LEAD TANK

Major Hoess ducks down into the turret and pulls the hatch shut...just as Jackson's bullet WHANGS off the metal. Missed the bastard. The tank keeps rolling as:

(CONTINUED)

THE SIX STICKY BOMBERS

swarm from the rubble on both sides of the street, fuses smoking, running alongside the tank. They hurl their sticky bombs onto the treads -- then veer off and run like hell, scrambling back into the rubble, trying to gain precious seconds. Tank #2 OPENS FIRE on them with its forward machine gun. Wilson is TORN BY BULLETS and goes down...

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM! The sticky bombs DETONATE, blowing gouts of flame sideways over both sides of the street, and for an unnerving moment or two we figure nothing happened because the tank just keeps going --

-- but then the tread rips apart on one side, throwing up massive steel links. The tank skids, slewing to one side, wheels spinning. It stops, tries going in reverse -- but that throws even more tread off...

The lead tank just became a 60 ton roadblock. The other tanks jam up behind, slamming on their brakes.

INSIDE THE TANKS

TANK CREWS are shouting, looking for targets, trying to find a way around. A VOICE cuts through the noise on the radio:

HOESS (filtered on radio)
Dreht die Kanonen um!

ALL FOUR TANK TURRETS

start cranking, muzzles coming around and leveling at the surrounding buildings.

IN THE CRIPPLED LEAD TANK

Major Hoess finds a target, hollers into his headset:

HOESS
FEUER!

THE TANKS

start BLASTING at the surrounding buildings, punching storms of debris through the air, each muzzle-blast a thunderclap.

MILLER'S POSITION

Miller and the others are ducking and covering as debris hurtles and the tanks FIRE AWAY b.g.

THE AMERICANS

scramble and dive in the rubble as the tanks methodically

(CONTINUED)

blast the living shit out of the area. An EXPLOSION catches O'toole on the run, killing him instantly.

THE GERMAN INFANTRY

is scrambling, pulling their wounded off the road, swarming into the rubble, taking cover, OPENING FIRE...

THE THREE REAR TANKS

start backing up, still FIRING as they go. Stanz rears from the rubble with a bazooka, FIRES at Tank #2. The projectile WHOOSHES, deflects off the turret, EXPLODES against the building opposite -- and the building collapses, dropping a ton of wall down on the tank.

Tank #2 lurches, keeps backing up, getting clear of the debris. Muzzle cranking this way. Still operational. Stanz runs for it. WHUMP! The EXPLOSION is stunning. We don't even see what happened to Stanz.

The tanks lurch forward and veer off in various directions, leaving the road and heading through the rubble.

MILLER

sees it happening, shouts to the others:

MILLER
Let's go!

IN THE RUBBLE

The German infantry is trying to press forward. The Americans are hitting them with everything they've got:

MACHINE GUN TEAM #1

is hammering them with bullets...but the Germans are pressing closer, threatening to overwhelm them.

LYLE
DISPLACE!

They use rags to pick up the machine gun -- the barrel's hot enough to char the cloth. They fall back to another spot...

UPHAM

comes racing through the rubble with ammo belts, terrified as the world gets shot to pieces around him. He comes to Caparzo and Mellish as they also get pushed back:

CAPARZO
DISPLACING!

(CONTINUED)

They haul the sizzling-hot machine gun off its perch, fall back frantically under heavy fire. They come to a new spot, slam the machine gun down, RESUME FIRING...

CHURCH BELLTOWER

Parker BLAZES AWAY with his machine gun. Jackson's got his eye to his scope, picking targets below, FIRING.

Jackson ducks back as BULLETS CHEW the lip of the balustrade to splinters. Parker gives him a tense look -- they know we're up here.

IN THE RUBBLE

Miller appears, flattens against a wall. Here comes Tank #3, a Panzer, plowing through what used to be somebody's living room in an eruption of shattering plaster and lathe.

The tank reaches a stone wall and bogs down, grinding against rock, struggling to get through. Miller turns, motions -- Rice and Sanders race past him with sticky bombs, bobbing through the rubble. Ryan tries to go too, but:

MILLER
Not you.

Ryan wants to argue, but they see German infantry coming. They OPEN FIRE to cover Sanders and Rice, pinning the Germans down.

The tank is maneuvering, grinding, moments from battering through. Sanders and Rice come running and ducking. They pause at the tank, get the fuses going --

-- and one of the sticky bombs DETONATES PREMATURELY. Sanders and Rice literally VAPORIZE. The BLAST knocks over walls and slams Miller and Ryan to the ground. They roll over, stunned and horrified...as the Panzer grinds on, unharmed.

THE BATTLE

rages on in the rubble. The German infantry is swarming, FIRING, pushing forward by inches or yards...

The machine gun teams are HAMMERING AWAY at them, displacing, falling back, hammering away again. Upham is shuttling ammo to both teams, running like crazy through the rubble...

Trask surprises a SQUAD OF ADVANCING GERMANS with the FLAMETHROWER, hosing a stunning stream of fire through the rubble, setting men afire in a hell of mushrooming smoke...

The tanks keep plowing inexorably along, battering their way through, turrets swiveling, picking targets, FIRING and taking down obstacles in their path almost at random...

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON TANK #4

The other Panzer. Here it comes, grinding through the rubble. Sticky bombers swarm out to ambush it -- Reiben, Weller, Toynbe, Garrity. They slam-dunk their bombs onto the treads and run like hell --

WHAM-WHAM-WHAM-WHAM! The sticky bombs shoot GOUTS OF FLAME, knocking Reiben head-over-heels into the rubble...

He rises on his elbows, dazed, trying to clear his head. He turns, rolls over to look at the tank --

-- and is horrified to see it come through unharmed, still rolling. It swerves toward him. He scrambles desperately, trying to get out of its path, but his head's still spinning and he's not going to make it --

A bazooka projectile WHOOSHES up the tank's ass and blows out the engine. The tank stutters and hitches, groans to a stop.

Reiben looks past the tank -- and sees Stanz about twenty yards back. Stanz is filthy, covered with soot, perched on some rubble with a smoking bazooka in his hands. Their eyes meet for a moment -- Stanz gives him a shy little smile -- and then he's gone, ducking out of sight like a ferret.

The turret hatch lifts. A PANZER CREWMAN pops up with a Luger, shoots Toynbe dead. He turns, sees Reiben, aims...and a BULLET BLOWS through the crewman's chest, killing him instantly. Reiben looks around, realizes the shot came from:

THE CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson just saved Reiben's ass. He works his rifle bolt and turns away, scanning for other targets...

REIBEN

is stunned. His life's been saved twice within a span of moments. He joins the others as they swarm up onto the tank. CREWMAN #2 is emerging, but Weller shoots him. Pins are popped, grenades tossed in. A CONCUSSIVE BLAST kicks up.

THE CHURCH BELLTOWER

Jackson has his eye to the scope, scanning the street for another target...

RIFLE SCOPE POV

...and he brings the crippled lead tank into view, still blocking the middle of the street. The Tiger's turret is cranking around, the muzzle is raising -- right at the belltower.

(CONTINUED)

JACKSON

pulls his eye from the scope...a heartbeat of stunned horror as he realizes:

JACKSON
PARKER, RUN!

They scramble for the trapdoor, trying to get down, knowing they'll never make it in time...

THE CRIPPLED LEAD TANK

FIRES a thunderclap blast and:

THE BELLTOWER

vanishes in a STUNNING FIREBALL of hurtling debris. Gone.

THE CRIPPLED LEAD TANK

adjusts its muzzle down -- and FIRES AGAIN, blowing the rest of the tower to smithereens. TILT DOWN to Mellish and Caparzo in the rubble f.g., staring over their machine gun in horror.

MELLISH
Jackson! Goddamn it!

CAPARZO
(looks at the tank)
It ain't enough to knock the treads off! We gotta take the son of a bitch out!

Mellish FIRES A BURST, sends some Germans scurrying for cover.

MELLISH
Yeah? How?

Caparzo pulls a grenade. He's got an idea -- whatever it is, he's about to try it.

MELLISH
You nuts? It's a Tiger! Grenades don't mean nothin'!

CAPARZO
Maybe. Keep me covered...

Caparzo dashes toward the street, weaving through the rubble. Mellish KEEPS FIRING, pinning the Germans down.

Caparzo crouches near the crippled tank, pulls the pin, holds the grenade tight. Waiting. The muzzle is turning, adjusting, seeking another target...

INSIDE THE TURRET

Hoess finds a target and:

HOESS
FEUER!

CAPARZO

ducks, forearms pressed to his ears against the awesome MUZZLE BLAST. That's his cue -- he lunges over the rubble and runs straight at the tank. He jumps up and hooks his arm around the muzzle, slam-dunking the grenade down the barrel...

INSIDE THE TANK

...as a GERMAN CREWMAN opens the breach and extracts the spent shell casing...

INSIDE THE MUZZLE

...and the grenade comes rolling/clattering down the long dark tunnel of the barrel...

INSIDE THE TANK

...the crewman turns back with a fresh shell to reload -- and is stunned to see a grenade drop out of the breach at his feet. WHAM! The BLAST turns the screen white with a concussive hammerblow of echoing steel...

CAPARZO

scrambles up on the tank with another grenade. The hatch opens with a billow of smoke. Major Hoess rises into view, bleeding from the ears and nose, in shock. Caparzo drives him back down with an elbow to the face, drops the grenade in, slams the hatch. Another BLAST kicks up -- BOOM/CLANG!

MELLISH

is truly stunned. Caparzo jumps off the tank and runs back through the rubble, hollering and exultant --

CAPARZO
Holy shit, did you see that? Took those sons of bitches out--

-- and German MACHINE GUN BULLETS rip across him, spinning him dead to the ground.

MELLISH
CAPARZO!

Mellish RESUMES FIRING, screaming in anguish, raking bullets

(CONTINUED)

at the German positions...

...and his ammo belt runs out. That's the last of it. German bullets spatter the rubble, driving him down. He grabs an M-1 and falls back, running for his life...

IN ANOTHER AREA

Tank #2, the other Tiger, comes awesomely through a wall, ramping up and slamming back down again...

...as Miller and Ryan come running, ducking past shattered walls. They find Sarge, Garrity, and Henderson lying in wait for the tank. Henderson has a bazooka aimed.

SARGE
AIM FOR THE TREADS!

Henderson FIRES. The projectile connects and EXPLODES -- but the tank keeps coming, unaffected.

MILLER
FALL BACK! FALL BACK!

SARGE
GO! GO!

They run for their lives as the Tiger comes crashing after them. The FORWARD MACHINE GUN OPENS FIRE, swiveling and chattering. Garrity gets shot in the back and goes down, the tank rolling right over him, grinding him under...

MACHINE GUN TEAM #1

Fallon and Lyle are on their last ammo belt. A potato-masher comes spinning toward them, EXPLODES. German soldiers swarm forward as the smoke clears, overrunning their position...

IN ANOTHER AREA

Mellish comes running with his M-1. He sees Upham ahead --

MELLISH
UPHAM! RUN!

-- and suddenly a German soldier darts into Mellish's path. Both men freeze, staring at each other in stunned disbelief.

It's Steamboat Willie. The world stops for a heartbeat of time. Both men frozen. Are we friends? Are we enemies?

They both swing their weapons up simultaneously. Steamboat Willie is faster -- BRRAAAAAAAP! Mellish is driven back as BULLETS SLAM a bloody pattern into his stomach. He goes down hard, dead before he even hits the ground.

Steamboat Willie spins, turning his Schmeisser on Upham -- but Upham has a .45 pistol aimed. BLAM!BLAM!BLAM! Massive holes punch into Steamboat Willie's chest as he arcs back into the rubble, FIRING A BURST at the sky.

Upham just stands staring at the two dead men, in shock. Reiben appears at his side with his B.A.R., realizes what just happened.

REIBEN
C'mon, Upham, we gotta fall back.

Upham is slow to move. Reiben pulls him along, FIRING his B.A.R. to cover their retreat...

AREA LEADING TO SQUARE

Miller comes zig-zagging through the rubble with Ryan, Sarge, and Henderson, heading for the square...

...and here comes the Tiger bashing through. Trask hits it with the FLAMETHROWER. FIRE AND SMOKE mushroom skyward. Trask hits the trigger again -- and runs out of fuel. He frantically shrugs out of the harness, turns, runs for his life.

IN THE SQUARE

The surviving soldiers race into the square -- Miller, Ryan, Sarge, Henderson, Trask. Reiben and Upham appear too, everybody heading for the bridge...

Weller's already there, in the forward sandbag emplacement, racking the bolt of the machine gun...

The Tiger BLOWS THROUGH A WALL with its cannon and comes thundering into the square, treads grinding through a massive turn. The forward MACHINE GUN OPENS FIRE, swiveling, tracking the runners...

THE RUNNERS

Henderson is hit, goes down -- but everybody else makes it to the emplacement, throwing themselves over as INCOMING MACHINE GUN FIRE rips the sandbags.

The Panzer enters down at the other end of the square. Both tanks closing in now, backed by some infantry.

Weller OPENS FIRE with the machine gun. Ryan snatches up a bazooka, lays it over the lip, aims for the Tiger. Miller loads, pounds him on the helmet. Ryan FIRES. The projectile EXPLODES ineffectually off the treads.

RYAN
Reload!

(CONTINUED)

SARGE
We'll take it! You fall back!

Sarge gives Miller a look -- go, get him back there.

MILLER
You be right behind us!

SARGE
Count on it!

Ryan and Miller grab whatever they can, leaving the forward emplacement and racing across the bridge...

Sarge levels the bazooka over the sandbags. Reiben loads, pounds his shoulder. Sarge FIRES. This one also EXPLODES with no effect. Both tanks keep coming.

SARGE
FALL BACK!

They bail out in a big-ass hurry, grabbing whatever they can and running for it. Weller stays on the machine gun, BLASTING AWAY to provide some cover...

THE TIGER

swivels its muzzle toward the emplacement...

WELLER

abandons the machine gun, running after the others. The forward emplacement EXPLODES in a swirling ball of flame, sandbags, and debris. Weller is caught by the blast and thrown, dying as he slams off the pavement...

THE LAST SANDBAG EMPLACEMENT

at the far end of the bridge. The Alamo. Ryan and Miller come running and throw themselves over the sandbags. Miller grabs the last bazooka, hollers to Ryan:

MILLER
Connect those wires!

Miller lays the bazooka over the sandbags, waiting for the first tank. Behind him, Ryan frantically connects the wires to the detonator, spinning the wingnuts...

Sarge and the others are running up the bridge toward us. Behind them, the Tiger lumbers hugely into view...

MILLER
RUN!

(CONTINUED)

The Tiger's forward MACHINE GUN OPENS FIRE, ripping bullets up the pavement. The runners throw themselves in all directions for whatever cover they can find. Trask is hit in the leg and goes down. Sarge grabs him, drags him behind a buttress --

MILLER
DOWN!

-- as Miller FIRES THE BAZOOKA. The projectile rips down the length of bridge past the men and EXPLODES against the front of the Tiger. No effect. Miller desperately reloads as --

SARGE
GO! GO!

-- the men keep running, dragging Trask along the ground. The tank's machine gun OPENS FIRE AGAIN. Sarge is hit in the back and goes down.

REIBEN
SARGE!

MILLER
GODDAMN IT!

Miller FIRES THE BAZOOKA AGAIN. The last round. It EXPLODES off the tank as harmlessly as the others.

Reiben and Upham jump to their feet, now dragging two wounded men, going all out...

...and then the Tiger FIRES ITS CANNON. THE EXPLOSION TEARS THE WORLD APART, spinning it upside-down, ripping the air with heat and shrapnel...

...and everything goes quiet, as if the sound has drained out of the world. We're left with sounds that are remote, faint, surreal, disembodied...

SLOW MOTION SEQUENCE

...as we find Sarge dead through swirling dust. Somebody crawls to him -- it's Upham, dazed and disoriented, glasses cracked. He looks over and sees Reiben through a swirl of haze and smoke, using a bridge buttress for cover, one side of his face blackened. He's motioning -- c'mon, get off the middle of the bridge, for God's sakes. Upham looks back, sees:

THE MUZZLE OF THE TANK

emerging from the smoke with a surreal howl...

UPHAM

starts crawling, trying to get to Reiben...

(CONTINUED)

THE SANDBAGGED EMPLACEMENT

is a tumbled mess, everything strewn and smoking. Ryan and Miller rise into view, battered and stunned, hearing the tank coming: a bizarre animalistic howl echoes faintly up the bridge. They reach for the toppled .30 caliber machine gun...

REIBEN

reaches out, grabs Upham's hand, pulls him in. They cling together, huddling behind the buttress...

RYAN AND MILLER

slam the machine gun atop the sandbags. Ryan works the bolt (a sound we do hear: a big, echoing CLACK-CLATCH) and OPENS FIRE. The muzzle blast of the machine gun is silent, all we hear is the bolt whacking back and forth, the shells ejecting with a faint metallic shriek...

THE TIGER TANK

fills the screen. It lets off a bizarre howl, more animalistic than ever. If you closed your eyes, you could picture it with teeth and claws...

MILLER

watches the monster approach, sees:

THE TANK'S FORWARD MACHINE GUN

swiveling, taking aim...

MILLER

throws his arms over Ryan, shoving him down out of the path of the bullets -- and Miller takes several rounds in the chest. They fall from sight together...

REIBEN AND UPHAM

see Miller go down, soundlessly screaming his name...

MILLER

rises up wounded...playing out the final, grueling, inevitable moments...moving in a litany of pain...raising his .45 automatic...the only weapon left to him...

...firing...one round after another...knowing the futility but pumping the trigger anyway...pistol jumping soundlessly in his fist...running the magazine down to the final round...

(CONTINUED)

...he FIRES the final bullet...

...and sees the Tiger EXPLODE. MASSIVE GOUTS OF FLAME blow soundlessly over the sides of the bridge -- and a SECONDARY EXPLOSION blasts the Tiger's turret up into the air like a flaming pinwheel; it slams off the side of the bridge, taking a chunk with it, crashing hugely into the water...

...Miller stares slack in amazement...looks at the pistol in his hand...wondering for a brief moment if such a thing is even possible...

...and then he starts to hear them. He gazes up. Here they come, descending like voices from above, building to a choral crescendo...

RESUME NORMAL SPEED AND SOUND:

...as a pair of P-51 MUSTANGS swoop grandly over the bridge. Tank-busters. They peel overhead, no longer with the sound of voices, but with a THROATY ROAR OF PACKARD ENGINES.

REIBEN AND UPHAM

see the planes coming around for another pass. The Panzer is desperately trying to back off the bridge as the Tiger burns. Reiben and Upham come limping/running up the bridge...

...and find Miller dying in Ryan's arms.

REIBEN
...Captain...oh god...

They drop to their knees, grabbing onto Miller as if that simple gesture might keep him alive, anguish bursting like a dam. Reiben screams at the sky. Upham breaks down in tears.

Down at the far end of the bridge, the Panzer DETONATES with a superheated ball of flame. Both tanks destroyed. The Mustangs ROAR past, rising up into a steep climb.

MILLER

is staring at the clouds, unable to speak. He raises a bloody hand, pointing up. Ryan follows the gesture, looks up to see:

THE P-51s

climbing together, damn near vertical, straining magnificently at the apex of their climb.

MILLER

is trying to speak. Tears are streaming down Ryan's face.

(CONTINUED)

RYAN
They're tank-busters, sir. They're P-51s.

Miller may not have heard him. His breath is leaving his body...a bare whisper:

MILLER
...angels...on our shoulders...

His hand flails up. Ryan catches it. Their fingers clasp. Their eyes meet, and the last thing Miller says is:

MILLER
...earn this...

LONG LENS OF BRIDGE

Ryan, Reiben, and Upham sit with Miller's body, smoke drifting gently across the river. The first of the Sherman tanks appear b.g. from the treeline, coming toward the bridge as we

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT - RAMELLE TOWN SQUARE - DAY

TANKS AND TRUCKS roll across the bridge in endless columns. TROOPS come trudging by the hundreds. A big push is coming through. The GERMAN PRISONERS are being moved along, perhaps a dozen survivors, Dieter among them...

...and we find Ryan in the midst of it all, staring at the bodies being bagged and loaded for transport. Reiben and Upham appear at his side, ready to move out.

They look up, see one other survivor across the way. Stanz is at the medical aid station, arm splinted, shoulder bandaged. He gives them a shy little wave goodbye. Ryan returns it.

REIBEN
C'mon. It's a long way back to the beach.

Ryan nods. They turn to go as WE BOOM UP OVER the bridge, jammed from one end to the other with arriving troops. They just keep streaming over endlessly as we

FADE OUT

THE END